



VITA

Pilot and experience report

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1. Introduction

This report compiles the pilot results that have been achieved by the VITA partnership during the project lifetime. Also their experiences made with the LEVEL5 approach to evaluate and validate competence developments of learners in regard to social, personal and organisational competences (SPOC) with relevance for the service economy are included.

At an early stage of the project partners received support and instruction materials regarding the utilisation of the evaluation approach by descriptions acting recommendations distributed in form of the so called manuals. Further preparative support was offered during the 2 day VITA training course in May 2012 in Göttingen, where project partners received additional theoretical inputs and materials. During the course they also had the chance to practically apply a number of assessment methods on various competences, and to discuss their evaluation concepts for piloting with experienced evaluators from the REVEAL network against the background of the quality criteria for LEVEL5 assessments.

After several rounds of consultation, also in the frame of transnational partnership meetings, the decisions about the applied specific procedures were finally taken by the practice partners themselves in equivalence to their own project aims and their possibilities and resources. The learning projects and the learners were evaluated and the results in terms of competence developments were recorded and displayed in learners certificates with the LEVEL5 software.

On the following pages the application of the VITA validation system in various learning projects, educational sectors and countries will be described and summarised according to setting, objectives, basic learning characteristics, outputs and evaluation. The evaluation method will be shortly presented together with lessons learnt in reference to the VITA approach. In eleven case studies the scope of the informal/non-formal learning evaluation in relation to social, personal and organisational competences will be presented.

This report closes with a summary of the findings and lessons learned, from which recommendations for further applications were derived. Annexed to this report are the full pilot and experience reports of all partners as well as the contextualised reference systems partners have developed within their projects.

2. VITA – Assessment of Pilots

In this report the application of the VITA validation system in various learning projects within the four educational sectors of lifelong learning will be described and summarised according to setting, objectives, basic learning characteristics, outputs and evaluation. The evaluation method will be shortly presented together with lessons learnt in reference to the VITA approach. In eleven case studies the scope of the informal/non-formal learning evaluation in relation to competences specifically relevant for the service economy will be presented. Table 1 gives an overview of the validation projects that have been carried out by the VITA partners within the project lifetime, indicating the target groups and competences assessed.

	Educational Sector	Target group	Content/topic	Partner
1	Adult education	Unemployed Men from Southhill Men's Shed	Problem solving, leadership and networking	AONTAS, Ireland
2		Organisers of activities for the Swiss learning festival	communication skills and project management, Planning and organizing an event	SVEB, Switzerland
3	VET	Staff of a socio-economic enterprise (restaurant TOP Lokal in Vienna)	Customer orientation	Die Berater, Austria
4		Prison inmates	Leadership and tolerance	Insup, France
5		VET trainers	Communication and self-reflection	AuTh, Greece
6		Nurses in elderly care	Coping with stress	BUPNET, Germany
7		Employees of supermarkets	Customer orientation for customers with cognitive disorders	BUPNET, Germany
8		Employees of supermarkets	Customer orientation for customers with cognitive disorders	BlinC, Germany
9	Higher education	Students	Communication	VMU, Lithuania
10		Managers of child care	Inclusion leadership	VIA, Denmark
11	Schools	Students in extra-curricular activities	Teamwork and problem solving	METU, Turkey

Table 1: List of learning projects evaluated in VITA

2.1. Southill Men's Shed skills challenge (AE)

Aontas, Ireland

Introduction

The pilot project took place from March 2013 to the end of May 2013. The target group - Southill Men's Shed- is a men's group whose members are adult learners (from 23 to 68 years of age) from a disadvantaged background: long term unemployed, lone parents, members of the Travellers¹ community, migrants and refugees. Some statistics from the area:

- 47% of family units (where at least one child is aged under 15 years) in the Southill area are lone parent households.
- 41% of the population in the Southill area (over the age of 15) have left education with a primary education only or with no formal education; while 6% have a third level education.
- The unemployment rate for the Southill area is 50%. For males, it is 56%, while for females, it is 42%.



Setting

Community Education works with adults who wish to return to or continue their education, offering a learner-centred approach involving personal supports and tuition leading to positive personal, social and economic outcomes. It focusses its work on people who are distant from education and the labour market, and is generally developed in

¹ Irish Travellers (Irish: an lucht siúil) or Pavee, also called Tinkers or Gypsies (but not to be confused with the Romani people), are a traditionally itinerant people of ethnic Irish origin, who maintain a set of traditions.

local community projects and centres. Community Education is grounded on principles of justice, equality, social inclusion and citizenship.

Learning activities

Southhill Men's Shed is a men's group offering a number of learning activities through a community education approach: carpentry, cookery, the "skills challenge" (personal development course). Learners have been evaluated before and after "the skills challenge" course. As community education is an inclusive practice, learners have been involved in the course content design to respond to their learning needs. There are 10 learners taking part in the pilot project. They are all long term unemployed. There are people with physical disabilities, sight and mental health issues.



LEVEL5 Evaluation Scheme Applied to the Project

The 3 competences chosen for the development course were problem solving, leadership and networking. The learners organized a table quiz evening and a networking event to meet up with another Men's shed group based in Tipperary (a town nearby) during which they applied the new skills they learnt during the theoretical lessons.

The local conditions were taken into account when planning the programme, to ensure the group were fully consulted in the activities which they would be assessed on, and that the skills they were developing had real-life application.

The assessment consisted of a conversation with each of the learners (recorded on flip chart paper and also the final session recorded as a sound recording). Since some of the learners have a low level of literacy it would have been difficult to carry out a written assessment. The learners were informed about the validation after the completion of the course and they were enthusiastic at the idea of receiving a certificate showing the progress they made.

Project impact and experiences

“Participant D participated in the programme and from the outset presented with the greatest level of anxiety about the programme. He had negative experiences of formal learning and was uncomfortable with doing “homework”. The nature of the project was that the main activity was a group activity, and part of the assessment was based on the level of proactivity the learners displayed towards taking on additional responsibilities. Participant D although worried about his abilities to perform, was soon identifiable as one of the most proactive in the group. He strove to do all that was necessary to accomplish the work required for assessment. “as a group I think we did very well” was one of Participant D’s statements about the programme, and I think this group context allowed him to grow and develop within a safe environment. His progression was the most marked out of all of the group. His biggest learning was around his confidence to try and succeed at new things.”

The evaluation of the project was a learning process: it provided the opportunity to explore ways of showcasing the value of, and measuring, community education practice.

The VITA project allows the participating organisation to highlight progress made by learners and therefore it could be a powerful tool to make a case in front of funders/donors. It is recommended that the tutor/trainer be fully trained on LEVEL5 before they start the validation activity. Also, applying LEVEL5 for the first time could be time demanding in terms of adapting the rating to the context and to validate the learners’ competences but once the module has been defined it could be reapplied the following year or to a similar activity with a similar target group.



Picture 1: Southhill men after having received their certificates by the Irish minister of education and training

Discussion & Perspectives

The difference between the LEVEL5 Method and the FETAC one (Irish system of qualifications) is that LEVEL5 allows for measuring learners effective progress across the competence while FETAC requires the learner to be at the same level on all dimensions and doesn’t track progress if this isn’t the case. There are advantages and disadvantages in both methodologies and the provider should choose the most suitable method for the group/activity.

The competences inventory is a useful tool because it gives a detailed description of the levels for each competence. The competence level breakdown was used to develop the "South Hill Men's Shed Skills Challenge" personal development course. It could be used by the same group to develop other courses for the development of other competences and other groups could use it too.

Eleonora Peruffo, AONTAS

2.2 The Swiss Lernfestival - Recognition of Competences for voluntary Event Organizers (AE)

SVEB Switzerland

Introduction

The Lernfestival is a Swiss Campaign to promote lifelong learning, similar to the Adult Learners' Weeks. We are celebrating the joy of learning the 3rd week in September (each year) for 24 hours. Before that time the crucial part is, to find persons, who are willing to participate as volunteers and to organize an event in their village, town or region. These are mostly persons, who are already dealing with a workload of tasks, but find it important to promote Lifelong Learning.

Setting

The Lernfestival is a Campaign for Lifelong Learning, which takes place during 24 hours on the 3rd weekend in September. It starts at 5 pm on Friday and ends at 5 pm on Saturday. The idea behind is to bring learning activities directly at the doorstep of the people and in addition to connect the institutions who are involved in learning activities (including policy maker and SMEs). The goal is, to work together instead of being competitors. It also should help to strengthen a city / region through being involved in a common goal, also known as unique selling point. A good example is Hamburg, who did fight obesity and schools, sports, seniors (being a guide for kids and help them to do the homework) and nutrition companies to bring healthy food on the table at noon, including mothers who did the cooking not only for their children, but also for their friends.



Learning activities

The Swiss Lernfestival was celebrating its 10th anniversary. That's why it was a very good opportunity to invite our Coordinators for a special treat and to tell them, that it will be possible to make the competences VISIBLE they are acquiring by working for the Lernfestival. So we invited all to 3 workshops in January and March to get ac-

quainted with LEVEL5 and to discuss the competences they would like to work with. And what would help them best, to organize their own event. First, there was a lecture, then we had three workshops. After that, it was in the own responsibility to take over the coordination and work in “the field”. Each coordinator could organize their own festival (24 hours or less). A must was, to take over the Slogan “Learning with head, heart, hand and feet”. The envisaged outcome was to attract people to be part of the Festival, to be involved as a sponsor, to become a participant and to be part of a movement that could bring an added value to the city: I.e. Motivation to learn, to be active, and to be part as an active citizen.

LEVEL5 Evaluation Scheme Applied to the Project

As the task, to organize an event, was the same for everybody, during the workshops we agreed on a self-evaluation and as planning and organizing a 24 hours event is crucial, we did focus on those two: communication skills and project management. A provisional grid was explained and discussed with the learners. Then it was adapted to their needs, worked out as a tool for self-evaluation and then presented and approved by all. People filled out first the self-evaluation, then they got the grid and we sat down for the first assessment. After the Lernfestival was finished end of October 2013, and all the internal evaluations were done, we sat down for the second evaluation and used the grid for an interview.

Project Impact and Experiences

In Switzerland this kind of projects are not well known and it was not easy to find people who were willing to participate. People do not have time for long questionnaires and are mostly not so fluent in English, that’s why they had to be in German. I think, LEVEL5 is a really good and acceptable method for both parties (evaluator and course organisers) involved as it offers added value for both sides.



For the learners it was an adventure as they mostly had no competences for project management, communication or working with a team, as a teamleader. That’s where LEVEL5 could help here. LEVEL5 urges you to sit down and analyze the structure and

gives you the whole insight: Why am I stuck here, why does it not work, what can we / I do? And in addition, you get a feedback from LEVEL5, you talk together – it helps to understand the (may be vicious) circle and also the co-worker/team partner. It gives you a prospective and a different view of a problem and also the possibility to solve it. At the end, LEVEL5 broadens the awareness of others and sharpens your mind.

Also for the assessor it is a very good tool, to figure out, how a coordinator is already knowledgeable about the Lernfestival and what the skills are he or she already brings in. So the assessor knows exactly, what this person has to be taught or what kind of special help/counselling is needed. On the other side, the coordinator, who is volunteering get's a certificate and in addition an added value including new skills out of being part in the Swiss Lernfestival. The methods used for the assessment were considered adequate. The coordinators that participated in the evaluation are really proud to have a paper, that proofs that they begun at stretch, with no money, but a lot of guts and optimism to tell people that Lifelong Learning is most important and has not to be neglected.

Discussion & Perspectives

I am a great friend of LEVEL5 as it makes visible the things that had been unseen until now. And it's also a very important tool for persons who had no possibility to validate their informally acquired competences yet. It has proved a valuable tool in the context of preparing the Lernfesitval and it is intended to apply it again next year. Changes foreseen, as result of the experiences made, will be to start planning earlier and maybe to work more on regional level than only in a town or little village.

This year (2014) there will be the next Lernfestival. In addition we are celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Law of Vocational Training. We will organize a special Exhibition for further education and training. And I would like to work during these days also with LEVEL5 as an exceptional assessment tool.

Ruth Jermann, SVEB

2.3 The socio-economic enterprise TOP Lokal Vienna (AE)

Die Berater, Austria

Introduction

The learning activity was initiated by the Austrian Labour Market Service in col labour-ation with the SÖB Top-Lokal. The main objective of the SÖB Top-Lokal is to support long-term unemployed persons in Austria and to promise them a better future after visiting training on-the-job. This means, after visiting training, participants are trained to be able to find jobs and to change their old patterns according to new attitudes, knowl-ledge and skills. The learning activity “learning by doing” lasts for six months for each participant. Seven persons included in the VITA project received an additional training on “customer orientation” and workshop including two self-assessments.

Setting

Customer orientation is one of the most important competences that need to be acquired in the service industry. Continuous learning and development of social, personal and organisational competences (SPOC) is increasingly important in order to cope with rapidly changing demands in the service industry. The challenges for unemployed people are much



higher since they have to consider many factors in order to convince their employers of their competences and landing a new job.

The activities focused on assessments before and after a learning situation where awareness raising activities took place that make learners to provoke some aha-effects. This means learners were aware what is important and how to gain necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to cope better with customers in the future. As a metaphor “customer” means everybody they are dealing with in their environment, however in this specific learning project priorities are set on their customers in a res-

restaurant. The knowledge gained can be applied as mentioned before in every single life situation!

Learning activities

In order to create work places and development of key competences, a training course for unemployed people was launched in the SÖB Top-Lokal focusing on customer orientation and development of SPOC. At a real work place learners have the possibility of learning by doing and applying new skills, attitudes and knowledge with customers and in-front-staff of the SÖB Top-Lokal. The project and learning activities took place in a SÖP Top-Lokal restaurant. Activities were carried out such as: ordering food and drinks by delivery companies, preparing meals in the kitchen and serving the food to the customers by supervision of professional cooks and front-of-house staff. Two self-assessments and a workshop have been organised with regards to customer-orientation. Invaluable insights, self-reflection and feedback including use LEVEL5 were identified by learners.

LEVEL5 Evaluation Scheme Applied to the Project

The system LEVEL5 was used in the development of competencies related to customer orientation. The piloting focused on self-assessment before and after a learning situation as envisaged in LEVEL5. The learning situation was incorporated in LEVEL5, the reference system was developed for customer orientation and people who were trained could



evaluate themselves in the self-assessment before and after a learning situation. The reference system is available in German. Learners were informed about validation in an informal meeting before the self-assessment. They weren't aware of their competences before the training and they become aware of their competences, they could describe them in clearly which was not the case before the training. Since learners work with customers it was important for them to teach them how to deal with customers in a work situation, with all challenges that are necessary to work in a service industry. The reference system for LEVEL5 was developed and used in order to have guidelines including indicators set for customer orientation. The evaluation process was longer than expected because learners needed more information about the VITA project and its objectives. LEVEL5 system was explained to participants, what is it and

how it can be used. All participants were interested in using LEVEL5 and curious about their competence development that could be measured with LEVEL5. After self-assessments and the workshop they could reflect on the learning situation. Rating grids were used for the documentation of the learning outcomes that were filled in the end of the learning activity and prepared for the LEVEL5 certificates.

Project Impact and Experiences

The project provided interesting insights from parties, trainers and learners. New insights were communicated by learners. It was a learning activity mostly with self-reflection regarding own competences. The confirmation of the competences developed and made transparent were the LEVEL5 certificates that learners appreciated very much not only for their self-reflection but also for consideration of other competences and convincing employers for their future jobs.

Discussion & Perspectives

LEVEL5 can be seen as an effective tool for self-evaluation and self-reflection. Many people are challenged at the beginning and need more assistance and explanations why it is necessary to reflect on themselves. The major factor is always connected with the correct analysis of the people who they're, what they can, what they cannot, who can help them and how etc. Taking the seven participants into account and their failure to find a new job is because of the situation that they were not aware of their attitudes, knowledge and skills and were not able to convince their potential employers for jobs. It would be very interesting to trace the further steps of the participants, to see the changes occurred in their lives, to see how they implement the new gained skills into their future life and work.

Bozica Ilijic, die Berater

2.4 Sewing qualification in prison (VET)

Insup, France

Introduction

The training project is commissioned by the prison authorities and cofinanced by the Aquitaine Region and the European Social Fund. It is an innovative project in a French prison: the vocational and education training and the education department (school) are working hand in hand to carry out this action: one trainer (technological aspects) and three teachers (general subjects) plus two coordinators. The trainees/detainees have the possibility of obtaining after ten months of learning, a diploma and probably a better situation as prisoners. The objectives for the learners/detainees of the project are:

1. To obtain an Education Department qualification.
2. For certain types of prisoner, to continue incarceration in another type of prison where they will be given work involving sewing.
3. For other types of prisoners, to have access to work experience placements when they are released, or in the case of day release, probation, parole, etc.

Setting

Penitentiary centre of Bordeaux-Gradignan in South West of France: the INSUP training centre was provided with a room in the heart of the workshops within the prison walls. Here, about fifty inmates execute work for outside companies. Eight project participants spend time alongside these workers, sometimes joining them in their production of tramway seat covers, professional overalls, immersion heater covers, etc. which is a similar situation to a work placement in a professional environment. These trainees/ detainees are adult men aged between 25 and 57. They have been incarcerated under correctional or criminal procedure for offences - ranging from individual or group



violence to drugs consumption and/or trafficking, theft, fraud and rape - or crime. Their initial level of qualification is mainly French level VI (no qualifications, early exit from the education system and non acquisition of basic knowledge...).

Learning activities

The LEVEL5 was integrated at the very beginning of January 2013, i.e. four months after the launch of the training course. It was a deliberate choice of the coordination unit: the turnover within this target group of detainees was very important to start with and the students/trainees weren't available for such an additional activity as the LEVEL5. The LEVEL5 was presented by INSUP and integrated in the learning activity as a way of assessing the informal learning outcomes of the detainees who take part in the training course.

LEVEL5 Evaluation Scheme Applied to the Project

Leadership and tolerance were the two topics chosen by both coordinators and staff. Three types of assessment methods were implemented:

- Observation and regular feedback within the team (note taking and minutes)
- Discussions with Education Department teachers
- Individual interviews with participants based on the assessment grids

The detainees were informed about the validation. So that they are reassured (“the evaluation, will it be integrated to my criminal file?”), we had to explain the “informal learning” and our methodology. We did insist on one point: the LEVEL5 as a tool of assessing their progress or not. The two topics were finally chosen by both of teams (Education department and vocational training) and the coordinator was very close to a clash when he announced and explained one of the topics: tolerance. There was moreover a second expectation of trainees about the assessment: if there is no progress will I get my diploma?



The aim of the piloting was to evaluate LEVEL5 in the development of competencies related to VET sector: 1) use of LEVEL5, 2) check the impact of the assessment with this type of trainees LEVEL5 was integrated in the learning activity through following activities:

Trainees' competences (leadership and tolerance) to be assessed as part of the learning activity were determined in consultation with the teachers and the trainer. The competencies were contextualized in line with the project goals and activities. The trainer was asked to fill out the LEVEL5 assessment tools for each detainee (a total of 5 due to turnover). Assessment for each dimension in LEVEL5 was done for each trainee to summarize the development for each competency. The competences selected for assessment (leadership and tolerance) were selected specifically insofar our training centre did want that to create a debate within the group and the stakeholders to make the mentalities evolve: VET sector must not be generally in consensus. The contextualization of the



competences appears to be important in relating the common descriptors to the ones that are relevant to the context of learning activity. Trainer did have some difficulty in using the LEVEL5 system in assessing trainees' competences due to the context of regular turnover. She received help and advices of the VITA French team. Multiple methods of data collections were effective to do the assessment. About the impact of the assessment to the detainees, we can state that the implementation of LEVEL5 has allowed to launch the discussion even if it was usually rough and get people wonder about themselves and their vision of others. The evaluation of informal skills cannot just hide behind the access to a diploma and above gives an overall consideration of the individual. Elsewhere and finally, the detainees found quite fair their assessment.

Project Impact and Experiences

The teachers and the trainer consider that the implementation of LEVEL5 was a very good way to share and to compare our point of view on detainees. Most of time, we had informal debates on these topics and lines of thought thereby



structuring knowledge of persons. The training session in prison gave the team necessary knowledge on their general work and the LEVEL5 methodology added them fineness and consistency of judgement certainly more adequate in our global approach. The team did have the feeling to learn about their way to observe trainees and the acuity of judgement on them. Our view on detainees had an influence on the good results of the training. For our team it was the first experience with this methodology.

The most difficult step was to identify two topics and above all keep a good balance in the fact of thinking permanently to LEVEL5 and be natural not to overlay one or the other subjects. The team that applied it had to take some extra time in order to familiarise with the reference system content, but in the end, the LEVEL5 has been perceived as a useful tool in extracurricular activities. So the effort was real all along the training course and sometimes a bit time-consuming but the result was very finally interesting: the input-output ratio was good beyond our hopes.

One of the effects on detainees is that LEVEL5 have led them to open their way of thinking about topics to controversy especially in prison. In this place or we do not talk or we solve the problem without discussion. So they made progress in relation to leadership and tolerance competencies: the idea that any subject can be conceptualized in a 3D cube with multiple levels and dimensions had a strong impact for some of them. Several detainees used the LEVEL5 to signify the family they make progress on themselves, they make an effort and they get closer to rehabilitation. Even if the problem is not resolved (tolerance), talk is a first step. The 3D-stage system was a suitable approach to describe competence development of our trainees. This training course was a very concrete action and the objectives were very clear since the beginning as extra-possibilities for them: salary, qualification, shorten the stay in prison, work placement...So, the teamwork didn't have to motivate them at all to act or to be in

daily life in community. Moreover in prison, emotions are palpable. The observation on the 3D-stage system was facilitated.

Discussion & Perspectives

Three teachers out of four were specialists of this public in charge of the training and of the prison sector. For the fourth contributor, she was the technical trainer in sewing for first time and in prison. She did appreciate to be involved about the LEVEL5 approach and not just to evaluate the technical progress of the detainees. The team considers the LEVEL5 was very useful and relevant to determinate precisely the situation of each trainee: that is to say to formalise the informal learning. The LEVEL5 was very helpful to tell the Prison Authorities how the prisoners advanced on the training course on an individual point of view and within the group.

LEVEL5 requires a good level of learning and practice. In our case, the coordinator of INSUP participated in a workshop on LEVEL5 and made the link with the new teamwork. In addition the good communication among the partner teachers and trainer leading the learning activity was essential in sharing experiences and col labourating on the tasks to be accomplished. The system is flexible and very relevant to our training centre. At last, in VET sector, the fact is that the trainers have the obligation to evaluate the trainees and so tools are available.

Jean-Marie Dubile, Insup

2.5 Validpack: validation of informal and non-formal psycho-pedagogical competencies of adult educators (VET)

Aristotle University Thessaloniki, Greece

Introduction

“Validation of Informal and Non-Formal Psycho-Pedagogical Competencies of Adult Educators” responds to the European needs by initiating and developing specific measures, instruments, strategies for recognition, validation and certification of the competencies acquired in non-formal and informal settings and contexts – especially for adult educators. Furthermore one of the aim of the project was the validation of SPOCs as part of the psycho-pedagogical competencies of adult educators in Greece. We assessed 3 competences: communication, self-reflection and problem-solving.

Setting

This pilots took place in Thessaloniki (1 urban KEE), in Athens (1 urban KEK), and in Crete (1 rural KEK in Chania and 1 urban KEE in Heraklion). During the implementation of the pilot the aim was to look at modes of validation of SPOCs as part of the psycho-pedagogical competencies of adult educators and trainers in continuing VET. 80 days in total was the duration of the whole piloting process. This counts to 150 hours over the period between 2 May and 19 July 2013.

Learning activities

30 adult educators and VET trainers with at least 2 year teaching experience but with no formal teaching professional qualification or pedagogical training were trained in 3 different cities of Greece. Validpack is directed to all educators defined as trainers. That means, if someone is an adult educator who has trainer experiences for more than one year / 150 h of working with adults, they are entitled to use the Validpack and to get their adult educators' competencies be validated. All participants essentially reflected on their biography and experience in order to self-assess their psycho-pedagogical competences and essentially to respond to the following:

- What are your previous experiences related to your role/position as a trainer in adult education?

- Have you been involved in adult education activities without having an explicit adult education job (consultant, counsellor, coordinator of study groups etc.)? If yes, please mention them.
- What opportunities for initial and further professional development have you taken as a trainer (courses, peer tutoring, mentoring, study visits, internships etc.).
- What other contexts you find as offering relevant/possible opportunities for the achievement of competences defining the performance as a trainer?
- Which concrete abilities/skills can you associate with a concrete learning context? What competencies have you acquired in this context?
- Can you name concrete activities where you learned/acquired competences/things you now use in your adult education work?
- What are the learning outcomes of the profession / home / leisure time / work etc.?

Thessaloniki

The process roughly consisted on the following instruments: mind map, reflection on biography, reflection on competences (social and organisational in particular), “attachment”, a possible observation checklist, an interview grid, a validation sheet. In addition to it contained some useful guidelines and indications for adult educators and CVET trainers on how they should approach the validation process. The whole pilot project was organised around three main validation steps: (i) self-evaluation, (ii) external evaluation and (iii) consolidation. The validation was completed only after all the three steps were taken. The process also involved four in-vivo sessions, namely foci groups, in the premises of the adult education centres and CVET structures mentioned previously. 10 adult educators participated in the focus group that was held in Thessaloniki, 10 CVET trainers participated in the focus group that was held in Athens, 5 CVET trainers in the focus group that was held in Chania and 5 adult educators in the focus group that was



held in Heraklion, Crete. During these session adult educators and CVET trainers had to explain (with the help of a facilitator that was appointed by George Zarifis who was also present during the entire process) of their understanding and interpretation of SPOCs in their own working context and provide their feedback on the implementation of VALIDPACK and LEVEL5 as validation tools. Based on a list of short questions (provided in Greek) the facilitators guided through the sessions. Finally, the facilitators collected the feedback in a voice-recorded format which they later transcribed. During the sessions the adult educators and CVET trainers also worked closely with the facilitators in order to reflect on SPOCs and especially to focus on those SPOCs that more easily applied in their cases. The facilitators again provided all the instructions. This process ended with a written report in which the facilitators summarized the results of the four sessions according to the reporting grids of LEVEL5.

Athens

All facilitators are from AUTH and they are trained and qualified adult educators. Their role were to select at least five (5) trainers who are operating/ activating in adult education field, no matter if they are activating in vocational education and training field or in general adult education field. Each facilitator had to provide the trainers the Validpack instrument and to work closely with them in order to help them self-evaluate their competences.



Each facilitator had to provide the trainers the Validpack instrument and to work closely with them in order to help them self-evaluate their competences.

Heraklion, Crete

During the first session of testing the facilitator will present the Validpack instrument and next, the trainers will have to take a look on the instrument and to give their feedback on it at first sight. We provided the facilitator a list of questions that guided the session. Finally, the facilitator collected the feedback. During the



second session of testing, the trainers worked closely with Validpack instrument for a two weeks period, time in which they have to reflect on the three parts of the instrument (to analyze the design, the content and the structure of the instrument) and especially to focus on the first part (to apply the self-evaluation part on themselves). The

project partner provided the facilitator instructions for this testing session. After the two weeks period, the facilitator met the trainers (face to face meetings in Thessaloniki, Athens and Crete) according to a grid provided by the project partners.

LEVEL5 evaluation scheme applied to the project

Level 5 was integrated in the pilot learning activity from the beginning as a way of self-assessing and self-evaluating the psycho-pedagogical competences who participated in the process. The LEVEL5 cube was presented to all participants prior to the Validpack process and the initial idea was the whole process to take place on-line through a platform that was developed for the BACK TO WORK project that introduced a tool for competence validation for employment counsellors, in which we were involved. However the coordinator of that project refused to give access to our participants with the argument that BACK TO WORK platform must be accessed only by employment counsellors. However and since we had already located our participants we decided to visit them ourselves and do the whole process in situ. It must be noted at this point that the pilot was based on the validation procedures prescribed in Validpack, but within the logic of LEVEL 5. The fact that often job relevant competences - SPOC in particular - are not covered by traditional qualification documents is an opinion shared among practitioners, researchers and decision-makers involved in adult education in Greece and elsewhere; as these competences have been acquired in less traditional and official learning contexts and through a variety of working experiences, they become difficult to standardize and validate, especially as in different countries there are different contexts. However, the attempt to validate or accredit prior learning is common: the accreditation of previous & experiential learning (APEL), the French „Bilan de compétence” – not limited to a specific profession, the Swiss Qualifications book „CH-Q”, the German „ProfilPass” or the German „skills analysis”, are only some of the examples used to validate job relevant competencies in Europe. Generally speaking the validation of competences can be described as a process of competence identification, competence measurement and competence assessment that can be done using different methods and instruments. A lot of competences that are job relevant have been developed in informal and non-formal learning contexts. This also applies to the competences defining the adult educator that frequently go unrecognized. A lot of adult educators and trainers interact with adults in a didactical way without an explicit qualification (i.e. a higher education degree in education or pedagogy or andragogy or didactics) for their activity. Most of them have acquired their specific psycho-pedagogical competencies for dealing with adults on the job, through working experiences, during

on the- job trainings, through voluntary work or simply by dwelling with adult learners. According to the above mentioned social and economic new developments and challenges in Europe validation of informal and non-formal psycho-pedagogical competences of adult educators as part of SPOC, needs to be applied by initiating and developing specific measures, instruments, strategies for recognition, validation and certification of the competences acquired in non-formal and informal settings and contexts – especially for adult educators and CVET trainers. Within the context of psycho-pedagogical competences therefore the following SPOC were evaluated: communication competence, intercultural competence (social), self-reflection competence (personal) and problem-solving competence (organisational). In this process LEVEL 5 was essentially integrated in Validpack approach. The reflection on biography acted as a smooth introduction to the whole process since the adult trainer recalls his previous experiences and commences thinking reflectively. The mind map is a useful way for the user to concisely illustrate what was previously mentioned and in a way visualize it. Following, the reflection on competences takes a “deeper dive” into user’s skills and abilities while, finally, the attachment of the validating documents, fosters the objectivity and validity of the research – assisting researcher’s work – as well as helps the user understand which competences he/she “officially” has. As the majority of participants see it, it is organized in a correct way as the self-evaluation introduces the user to the whole process by engaging him/her to a process of self-reflection. Subsequently, the external evaluation acts supportively to the first stage by enabling the researcher to draw more objective conclusions. Finally, the consolidation stage brings the two previous stages together and as a consequence, both participants gain an overall, deep understanding of their work. The instrument is clear and well structured and organised. It is accessible and easy to understand from the first instant. All together –especially the self-evaluation section as most trainers have noted– is comprehensive and useful as it gives the opportunity to trainers and educators to look upon certain issues they haven’t thought before. The appearance is attractive and easy to use. However, it would be more convenient if it had the form of a book instead of a folder; a book with pages that could be detached from the main body. Organization and structure is very clear and so is the methodology. The three steps are very easy to understand and also to respond. Perhaps some parts are too extensive but this is also understandable. If it is to be translated in Greek accessible language should be used as some questions needed clarification by the facilitators. This is easy to adapt in the Greek context considering that the majority of those acting as adult educators and trainers have no degrees (some perhaps have the certification from

EKEPIS, the National Accreditation Centre but this is different). The language needs to be clear and perhaps some examples on how to fill in sections like in the self-evaluation step and consolidation could be useful. Also a short pilot procedure before applying the instrument to different groups would also be useful as many adult educators in Greece would be sceptical in using this instrument for their validation. Finally, it is also important to consider who will apply this instrument. If it is the University it is reliable, but trainers should not be under the impression that this validation equals to a university degree or certificate. After the instrument is translated into Greek we will have to make it known to those interested. A way of disseminating this form of validation will also demand adaptation to the laws and ministerial decisions on validation and APEL that will be enacted soon.

Project impact and experiences

This is easy to adapt in the Greek context considering that the majority of those acting as adult educators and trainers have no degrees (some perhaps have the certification from EKEPIS, the National Accreditation Centre but this is different). The language needs to be clear and perhaps some examples on how to fill in sections like in the self-evaluation step and consolidation could be useful. Also a short pilot procedure before applying the instrument to different groups would also be useful as many adult educators in Greece would be sceptical in using this instrument for their validation. Finally, it is also important to consider who will apply this instrument. If it is the University it is reliable, but trainers should not be under the impression that this validation equals to a university degree or certificate. Perhaps it would be useful if self-evaluation could be processed online as well as consolidation. It is not always easy to access adult educators and trainers or arrange a certain time to meet with them. External evaluation of course is different as the evaluator needs to be present and observe but also take the interview. The interview could also take place through the phone or online through 'skype' or teleconferencing when this is possible maybe. Based on the feedback of the participants the instrument is clear and well-structured and organised. It is easy to comprehend and from the beginning all facilitators were attracted by its format. The language is clear and simple. When it is translated to Greek, similar language should be used. It will be well received depending on whether it is or not adapted to the national legislation. If the validation is used and provided by trained people from the University then the degree of reliability will be high and many adult educators and trainers without any credentials but with long experience in the area will decide to come and be validated. If it is provided by an external organization

i.e. non-university or even more so irrelevant to adult education and training, then many people will look at it in a suspicious way as similar attempts were not well received lately. For example the EOPPEP certifies trainers but now most trainers would rather go and have a degree instead. The university is a good place to provide validation using this instrument.

Georgios Zarifis, AuTh

2.6 Specialised and Applied Palliative Care (VET)

BUPNET, Germany

Introduction

This learning project was a certified qualification course for employees in the field of geriatric care in rural areas in northern Germany on the issue of palliative care. Palliative care is understood as an individual, holistic care and support strategy for people with incurable diseases and people in the last phase of their lives. The course, awarding with a credited certificate in line with German care law, was organised in several extra occupational modules and took place from Mai to October 2013. The course focused on the key issues and problems of palliative care and provided insights, viewpoints, and the corresponding social, technical and methodological skills.

Setting

The aim of the piloting was to evaluate the development of competencies related to coping with (chronic) stress, which is considered an integral part of the work of a nurse. The choice of



the topic was based on the notion that this competence is crucial in order to be able to permanently work in this field, which is characterized by heavy physical and mental burdens and low salary. Also this was the main cross cutting issue for the participants, frequently discussed on the side during all the modules of the course, indicating the high importance dealing with stress has for the nurses and being an ideal example of informal learning.

Learning activities

The course consisted of 160 teaching hours in classroom blocks of three days each, plus 40 hours of shadowing to deepen the theoretical content. The lessons were held from 09.00 - 16.00 o'clock. The lessons focused on theoretical inputs and moderated reflection rounds, additional work shadowing at the nursing homes served to apply and deepen the learning content. In 6 modules the participants learned the basic knowledge of pain management and symptom control; Burn -out and self-care: psychologi-

cal aspects of coping; communication and working with relatives; special possibilities of basic care and treatment; dealing with dying, death and grief; religious, cultural and ethical aspects of palliative care.

Level 5 Evaluation Scheme Applied to the Project

The aim of the piloting was to evaluate the development of competencies related to cope with (chronic) stress as integral part of the work of a nurse. The competence assessment was not integrated into the course. It took place approximately 3 months after the end of the course. The assignment (as internal service at BUPNET) to evaluate the course was given only after it had ended so that it was not possible to integrate the assessment into the course nor to do an ex ante assessment. Thus the procedure had to be planned in a way that made it possible to cover the before-state as well, retrospectively getting answers about a state about 6 months before. In order to achieve this and to gain meaningful results the strategy developed built on the close relationship and great confidence that had developed between the participating ladies and the course manager, who was the one giving the lectures on burnout prevention during the course. It was assumed that participants would feel more free to speak about their coping with stress with someone they know well, rather than if questioned by someone external or in a paper questionnaire. Thus telephone based interviews were conducted which followed an interview questionnaire, that served to document the results as well.

The interview questionnaire was designed in to cover the before and after and to deliver indicators to allocate the answers to the respective levels and dimensions in the reference system. Literature on coping with stress and the contents conveyed during the course in the module about burn-out prevention were the knowledge basis for producing the described materials. Before the interviews were held, the materials went through a feedback loop, being commented by persons working in the field and knowing the target group and their understanding of questions well and were then refined accordingly. The analysis of the results and the ratings, including reasoning was quite time consuming as the questionnaire was rather complex and indicators were very individual, which made it difficult to standardise the rating procedure. A rough structure resulted from dividing coping strategies for stress into several categories, e.g. such aiming at relief on the physical, social or individual level in terms of self-perception and expectations. Also the intensity and frequency of the application of certain coping strategies was considered for the ratings.

The results of the individual ratings were offered to the participants during the interviews. They were informed about the context of the evaluation and application of the results and guaranteed anonymity. Those who were interested were marked by the interviewer to later receive certificates. These were distributed in November 2013 to 8 of the 12 persons interviewed. For the purpose of VITA anonymized certificates was created for all learners who participated in the interviews.

Project Impact and Experiences

The outcome of the evaluation was satisfactory. It could be shown, that all participants improved their way of coping with stress in one way or another. The interview questionnaire included a question on the state of well-being before and after to allow a cross check and almost all persons interviewed stated a more or less significant improvement of their subjective well-being.



Interestingly most participants intensified their coping strategies in regard to their social environment and interaction, like active conflict solving or using opportunities to exchange about stressful experiences, and those in regard to their self-image and the expectations directed towards themselves. The intensification of physical measures was mentioned comparatively seldom. The results of the knowledge dimension showed least variance. A possible explanation for this result could be the similar educational level and work context of the participants and the fact that they all received the same inputs.

LEVEL5 was not integrated into the course, so it is not possible to comment on the impact it would have had for the development of the competency assessed, as the reflective interviews were held after and there was no follow up assessment. Generally it can be said that reflecting on ones own learning stimulates competence development and may create motivation to further improvement. In terms of competence development the evaluation results clearly showed a development in the observed competence for all persons interviewed. The learners were open for the assessment as they felt that the topic is important for them personally and were open to reflect their learning progress in this regard. The ones deciding to receive certificates documenting

their learning outcome weren't sure if they would use it to display their development towards others, like the employer, but appreciated to have a documentation in which their learning is contextualized against the reference system.

Discussion & Perspectives

This project proved that retrospective assessments are possible and lead to satisfying results. The main difficulty in this regard was the design of the assessment materials, as they needed to be more complex and sophisticated as if the before and after assessments would be pursued in two separate situations. The interview situation made it possible to stimulate the participants reflection by additional questions. If it would have been a pure paper based survey it can be guessed that it would have been much more difficult to gain meaningful results.

LEVEL5 is a valuable instrument to assess and visualise progress in competence developments informally gained. Already we're working on applying the approach to courses in the health care sector and for a youths training on soft skills. Therefore new reference systems have been developed focussing on the competences on communication as team leader in the nursing sector and communication in a team for the youngsters. The experiences gathered in SuperMAN and Palliative Care are valuable and helpful to reduce future effort and for the design of the assessment and rating procedures.

Sabine Wiemann & Julia Busche, BUPNET

2.7 SuperMAN – Supermarkets meet Accessibility Needs in Germany (VET)

BUPNET, Germany

Introduction

SUPERMAN aimed at opening the theme of accessibility to the social level, specifically in promoting accessibility to public spaces for mentally disabled people or persons suffering from dementia. The problems to tackle in this regard are related to the restraints of these customers and the barriers resulting from these, thus are more relational and cultural than architectonic. In 2007 in France, some supermarkets implement training courses for their staff in order to



Symbol of social accessibility

make supermarkets accessible places for cognitively disabled people. SuperMAN's goal is to import the good practice developed in France to Italy and Germany.

Setting

The learning activities of the project took place between end of February and beginning of June 2013. In this period 6 trainings for staff of supermarkets took place to convey knowledge about the specific needs of cognitively disabled persons as customers, to open space to exchange experiences made with these persons and to reflect on ways to implement the concept social accessibility in the markets.

Learning activities

The trainings had a duration of 5 hours and consisted of theoretical inputs on cognitive disability and dementia and ways to meet the needs of these persons. Further moderated reflection rounds about experiences and ways to implement changes and role plays were exercised, which were designed to make the participants anticipate difficult situations that may arise for cognitively disabled persons when shopping at the supermarket. The practical part of the learning, applying the training content in real life situations, took place at the work places of the participants, the supermarkets.

LEVEL5 Evaluation Scheme Applied to the Project

The topic selected to be assessed was “Customer orientation towards clients with cognitive disabilities”. The LEVEL5 evaluation was based on evaluation questionnaires handed out at the end of the training and partly on contributions of the participants during the training and documented directly after for the first assessment. The second



SuperMAN training in Sondershausen, March 2013

assessment was based on questionnaires only, which were sent to the participants three months after the training. The evaluation with LEVEL5 was not communicated to the participants of the training as evaluation of competence development; instead it was justified as a measure of quality assurance. Hence it wasn't introduced explicitly to the participants of the training nor integrated explicitly into the learning activity.

The learning outcomes of the reference system in the cognitive dimension reached from “knowing that customers with cognitive disorders can have special needs and may behave in unpredictable ways” (Level 1) to “intuitively knowing (or to be able to acquire knowledge on) how to deal with customers with different cognitive disorders in different contexts” (LEVEL5).

Related to activity the range was defined between “perceiving and recognising (“not normal”) behaviours of customers with cognitive disorders that may require support, without acting” (Level 1) and “developing of own ways of interacting with and to support customers with different cognitive disorders, that go beyond purely helping to shop” (LEVEL5). Attitudes described in the affective dimensions ranged from “anticipating needs and problems of customers with cognitive disorders based on own perception and experience” (Level 1) and “developing own ways of interacting with and to support customers with different cognitive disorders, that go beyond purely helping to shop” (LEVEL5).

Indicators were derived from the individual answers given in the questionnaire (or observations made during the trainings) according to the level descriptions of the reference system.

Project Impact and Experiences

The outcome of the evaluation was satisfactory. It could be shown, that all participants improved their ways of dealing with cognitive disabled clients in one or more dimensions. Some participants mainly improved on the knowledge level, having a very positive attitude and acting accordingly already at the beginning. Others questioned their own views on disability and mainly showed improvement on the affective side.

The results of the assessment helped to differentiate the learners' needs in regard to the SuperMAN training offer. It was shown that older employees are much more advanced in dealing with special needs customers, just by their professional experience. Thus training for older staff needs other emphasis than a training for younger supermarket staff in regard to the relation of theoretical inputs and space for reflection and exchange.

Discussion & Perspectives

LEVEL5 professionally applied delivers good results, whether it is used as evaluation tool for the quality and design of learning offers as in this case, or as means to foster self-reflection of learners in respect to their learning progress and competence development as result of informal learning and thus to raise awareness for informal learning in general. Presently we're working on applying the approach to courses in the health care sector. Therefore new reference systems have been developed focussing on the competences to cope with stress and on communication as team leader in the nursing sector. The experiences gathered in Superman are valuable for the development of new approaches.

Julia Busche, BUPNET

2.8 SuperMAN – Supermarkets meet Accessibility Needs in Italy (VET)

Blinc, Germany

Introduction

SuperMAN aims at analysing the field of accessibility for mentally disabled people. The problems to tackle are cognitive and psychic difficulties and the barriers are more relational and cultural than architectural. Considering the specific needs of mentally disabled people, the project aims to design and implement actions to allow them a fully social inclusion. In 2007 in France, some supermarkets implement training courses for their staff in order to make supermarkets accessible places for mentally disabled people. SuperMAN's goal is to import the good practice developed in France to Italy and Germany. The project aims to promote mentally disabled people in accordance with the European priority of promoting inclusion and equality combating discrimination based on disability.



Setting

The Project started on 1st October 2011 and ended on the 30th of September 2013, and the Italian pilot took place in Forlì (Emilia-Romagna).

Learning activities

From the point of view of blinc, the aim of the learning activity was to assess the participants' development of the competence "client orientation in relation to clients with cognitive disorders. Therefore, the target group, employees of supermarkets, went through a training that was divided in three phases: 1 day face-to-face training, 3 months of practical period at their workplace, and 1 day face-to-face wrap-up session and LEVEL5 evaluation. There was never a knowledge input on cognitive disorders, indeed the face-to-face training was mostly facilitation of group work and of action



learning (such as role-plays).

LEVEL5 Evaluation Scheme Applied to the Project

It is important to note that LEVEL5 was integrated in the learning activity from the very beginning. A specific reference system was developed according to the needs of the participants and the context of the learning activity and then shared with the trainers. During the initial face-to-face training the trainer briefly and simply introduced LEVEL5 to the participants, explaining that the development of the competence was going to be assessed at the end of the learning activity. Also, participants were asked to keep a learning diary during the 3 months of the practical phase and wrote the first entry during the face-to-face event. Then, during the final face-



to-face session, at the end of the 3 months, a LEVEL5 expert explained again to the participants the concept of this innovative system, going more in details and showing the cube. Then, the expert guided the self and tandem assessment. At the beginning of the training, the participants did not quite understand the process and the value of LEVEL5 assessment; however, at the end they were all very interested and self-involved in the evaluation and were glad to receive a certificate showing their competence development.

Project Impact and Experiences

The final results of the piloting were extremely positive, considering both the learners' appreciation and the usability of LEVEL5. In fact, through LEVEL5 it was possible to demonstrate the great competence development of each participant involved. The system was extremely useful in helping the learner realising the learning process and its results. Many had taken the initiative to learn more about disability and dementia and felt obliged to share their knowledge and experience with colleagues and others in order to contribute to an inclusive society. On the other hand, blinc was able to not only

meet the goal of managing a high number of assessments with good quality, but the approach developed and tested in the pilot (of pre-formatted learning outcomes) is extremely interesting since it can be transferred and used in any other learning activity.

Discussion & Perspectives

One suggestion to improve the experience is to use neutral learning outcomes, using for instance “the participant” or “the learner”, instead of changing every time the name of the participant in the descriptions. It is time consuming and errors are easy to occur. Also, in case of pure self-assessment, the system could offer just pre-formatted learning outcomes without the summary of the learning process and the summary of the evaluation. In general we will continue using such approach of pre-formatted learning outcomes, especially in cases of self-assessment and high number of learners. In fact, we believe that the approach can match a number of different projects and actions. In particular, we are already adopting the same system in another European-funded project called Educckate (<http://educckate.eu/#!/home>).

To sum up, the system was found to be extremely practicable and the outcomes were widely accepted.

Enrica Pautasso, blinc

2.9 BA students of Career Guidance going to practical work placements (HE)

Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

Introduction

BA students of Career Guidance at Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas went for a practical work placement to different organizations as part of their formal undergraduate training. Their *communication* competence before and after the placement was assessed.

Setting

The learning project took place in Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania. The participants were undergraduate students of Career Guidance. Their assessment started February 4, 2013 with the first assessment of their communication competence before their practical work placement and finished with the second assessment after their placement on May 15, 2013.

Learning activities

The participants were undergraduate HE students in their 2nd year of studies (4 yrs in total). After graduation they will work as career counsellors in schools or hold any other administrative or non-formal training positions in the education sector. Practical work placement is a mandatory part of credit courses.



Students have their practical work placement in schools. However, formally students are graded for attendance, performance and final report of the placement.

LEVEL5 Evaluation Scheme Applied to the Project

The activity was initiated by the Department of Education, Vytautas Magnus University. Students were introduced to the LEVEL5 system and filled in the questionnaire that was operationalised according to the level and dimension descriptions of the commu-

nication competence. Students were interested to perform validation of the learning experience during practical work placement in schools.

Undergraduate students in their formal higher education receive high amounts of theoretical knowledge. However, their future work contexts will require high levels of personal and social competences, especially communication. Therefore, there is much expected that during their practical work placement in real life and workplace situations their communication competence may be increased. During their placement in schools students watch lessons and later organize career guidance and other extra-curricular education activities for the secondary school students. It is expected that students get acquainted with the practical functioning of a secondary education establishment, start practicing their career guidance skills and boost their communication competencies in real business environment. Students have their practical work placement mentors in schools, but their *before/after* validation of social competence was estimated by education department lecturers (participants of VITA project). The lecturer (mentor) welcomed the idea of assessment of a personal competence (social competence) in this case. She was shortly introduced into the system of 5 levels and 3D cube. She appreciated the idea, but it was evident that application of the system requires additional training and experience, so in this case the mentor of the practical work placement has passed assessment role to the LEVEL5 team.

Participants' efforts were eased by the fact that a self-assessment questionnaire related to certain levels of each dimension was prepared for them. Their achievements were easily transferred into questions that were connected to respective levels. Therefore students embraced the self-assessment willingly and eager to receive assessment of their social competence. They found it mostly easy to answer the questions, but also need guidance and certain amount of counseling as well.



Using the system in partly self-assessment way combined with partial expert discussions and counseling is feasible in assessing non-formal achievement of social competences in practical work placement in HE.

Project Impact and Experiences

This validation experience was very useful for the learners themselves as they admitted that they had a chance to get to know more about themselves, their learning and their own communication skills. The experience was very beneficial for the validating teachers (participating in the project) and the department as LEVEL5 opened opportunities for validation of personal and social competencies.

Discussion & Perspectives

LEVEL5 is very logical, persistent and systematic. It could be employed to validate social competences of students in practical work placement. The deficiency is that it is still rather demanding in terms of time and human resources. There are good perspectives for further use at VMU, but further developments are necessary to be made in order to make the process less time consuming.

Elena Trepule & Ausra Rutkienė, VMU

2.10 Inclusion Leadership (HE)

VIA University College and Skanderborg Municipality, Denmark

Introduction

'Inclusion leadership' was an action learning program for leaders of Danish kindergartens. It took place in spring 2013.

Setting

'Inclusion leadership' is part of a local municipality's policy implementation of the policy of including children with special needs in regular kindergartens. The inclusion policy is implemented partly by education of the pedagogical staff and leaders of kindergartens, partly by New Public Management measures, i.e. contracts and economic incentives. The educational part is directed toward pedagogical aspects of inclusion. The leaders typically hold a BA in pedagogy, many of them also a diploma in management and/or pedagogy. They were supposed to participate in the learning activity to improve their competencies as leaders of inclusion and in particular to support their newly trained staff.



Learning activities

The leaders met four afternoons over three months at a local municipal school and did action learning in their own kindergartens. In the afternoons they had lectures and group work facilitated by lecturers from VIA University College.

LEVEL5 Evaluation Scheme Applied to the Project

The focal competence, described and assessed with LEVEL5 was naturally named 'Inclusion leadership'. One of the lecturers formulated goals and indicators in LEVEL5 for 'Leading Inclusion', and used it as scaffold in her pedagogical planning of her part

of the learning activity. She introduced the LEVEL5 for 'Leading Inclusion' in her class during the second session, and the participants assessed themselves in a setting in which they could talk with peers in their team of leaders. In the fourth and final session, the leaders assessed themselves again.

A guiding principle for us in the piloting was that the activities should be an enriching experience for both the lecturer and the participants. In particular, we didn't want to bother and possibly bore them with the evaluation part. We therefore chose to ask them to reflect on their experience with LEVEL5 and chose to use their reflections as data. Reflection is regarded as a giving, but often too rare activity in our target group. The disadvantage of this method is that the data we got are unstructured and the conclusions depend heavily on our interpretation. However, there are so many clear trends in the replies that we do not see this as a major issue. During the second course session, the participants were presented for LEVEL5 for 'Leading Inclusion'. When they had evaluated themselves, they were asked to sit in silence and write down the reflections elicited by working with the schemas. This procedure was repeated the same during the fourth and final course session.

Many wrote, "It starts me thinking" and then they mentioned considerations on their leading and steps they wanted to take. Some expressed considerations specifically on leading inclusion, and among them, some also wrote about their uncertainties concerning leading inclusion. Others addressed the forms as a self-



assessment tool. In different ways, some of them said that "consciousness of the levels is useful". But others draw attention to the contingency of the assessments. It depends on the situation and on which level you are at. A handful of the participants are critical: They express that the assessments should be made in dialog with their employees i.e. not as self-assessment in the class. Two desisted from the use of the forms. You cannot measure competences this way, they said.

At the fourth and final session, there had been some rotation of the participants. Hence, some mentioned that it was the first time they saw the forms. They were fewer, and fewer of them handed in their reflections (23 the second time compared to 35 the

first time). Several of the participants related their reflections to “how far I myself am now”, as one stated it. They used metaphors like “I have moved forward” in their descriptions. And “It is good to ensure that one keeps on one’s toes,” one participant wrote. In other words, they identify with the goals and concept of LEVEL5.

Some discussed the usefulness of the forms in a leader-team: “You need openness,” one writes. Another said that the forms helped them to talk about the process in a good way. The general attitude to the forms was positive. But one wrote that reality is more complex and subtle.” Another said that “there are too many words in the forms”. A couple restated the criticism of using the forms in the class. But regardless of their attitude, they expressed that they found it good to reflect on their leading.

Project Impact and Experiences

The immediate effect of using LEVEL5 was explained by the lecturer who formulated the goals and indicators for ‘Leading Inclusion’: It directly influenced her pedagogical planning as she used these goals as targets. The participants’ reflections indicate that some of them seem to shape their understanding of the way they lead their employees’ work with inclusion by the wording in LEVEL5. Furthermore, some of the participating leaders said that they have used LEVEL5 for ‘Leading Inclusion’ in their team of leaders as a way of guiding their reflections. Thus it is most likely that it has some impact on the way inclusion is led and on the understanding of the leading of inclusion in the kindergartens of the municipality. But our data does not allow us to trace the impact further, and the matter will certainly be diffused by the influence of many other activities.

Discussion & Perspectives

The LEVEL5 for ‘Leading Inclusion’ is adopted by some the lecturer’s at the department of continuous education at VIA University College. Schematic methods are more and more adopted in the field of pedagogy and schematic management methods are reintroduced in leading, so we expect that there might be an interest for LEVEL5 in the general area as well as at VIA University College. On the other hand, a sceptical attitude toward it – similar to the attitude expressed by one of the participants – also exists.

Anne Lund, VIA College

2.11 CLIMES - Climate Friendly School Management System (School)

Middle East Technical University (METU), Turkey

Introduction

As an extracurricular activity, the CLIMES project seeks to involve teachers and students at METU School in creating an approach to reduce carbon emission of the school and develop an awareness to be more environment- friendly in school related activities and processes. Within this framework, the METU School has developed a structure to introduce the topic of climate change mitigation and adaptation to promote key competences in innovative learning environments. Students (N=8) involved in the project were guided by two science teachers and two professors from Middle East Technical University (METU). Specific objectives of the project included: (1) calculate carbon footprint of the school and develop strategies to reduce it, (2) raise awareness among other students toward climate change and ways to mitigate it, and (3) assess competencies developed in the project through LEVEL5 approach.

Setting

CLIMES Project took place at a private high school (METU School) on the campus of Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey in 2012 and 2013. All students, teachers and administrators at METU School were targeted to raise awareness about climate change and carbon emission. Our working project group involved eight students; seven are females and one male. They mostly came from above average income families with university education. Academically these students were well established, and they were in the process of preparing a high stakes test called university entrance exam. The group came together on voluntary grounds to form the Green Team Club. Although students were volunteers they needed to be involved in any available club or proposed one based on their choices as a partial fulfilment of extra-curricular activities in the school context. Students ranged from 9th graders to 11th graders and their ages were between 15 and 17.



Learning activities

The Project involved high school students calculating carbon footprints of schools and developing strategies to reduce carbon emission. Project activities involved carbon footprint calculation, developing strategies to reduce carbon footprint, developing activities and presentations to raise awareness among students toward climate change and ways to mitigate it. The Project was carried out through collaborative learning, action learning and problem solving.

LEVEL5 Evaluation Scheme Applied to the Project

We chose team learning and problem solving as the major topics to assess through LEVEL5 approach. For assessment, we used methods of self-assessment, teacher assessment, questionnaires, interviews and observations. The



learners were informed about the validation, and they were asked to do self and peer-evaluation to provide additional data for assessing informal learning competencies. Students were interested in this assessment process since they saw it as a motivating factor in participation in the project. Through the guidance of the research assistant, students provided data in relation to teamwork and problem solving competencies developed in themselves and in their friends. The data involved descriptions of these competencies developed within the context of CLIMES Project activities, examples to processes in relation to teamwork and problem solving competencies and their own feelings regarding these competencies.

Teamwork and problem solving competencies were chosen to be assessed in the project since they seemed to be the most critical competencies for the success of the project. Teamwork competence involved cooperation and collaboration among project members in relation to achieving the objectives of the project. This process involved frequent meetings among students, sharing of responsibility, close interaction and communication among members, collaborative work to carry out the tasks and activities in the project. Problem solving competence involved a reflective and problem solving approach to the process of carbon footprint calculation, reducing carbon emission

of the school and awareness raising activities among students in the school. Calculation of carbon footprint was not an easy task and required students to be creative in finding alternative ways of data collection and data analysis. In addition, to reduce the carbon emission of the school students had to adapt a problem solving approach since many of the areas of reducing carbon emission (such as energy use, transportation, garbage disposal) did not present easy solutions for the students. So students had to use critical and creative thinking to find solutions to the problems experienced in these areas.

Teamwork and problem solving competencies were described within the context of CLIMES Project activities and potential outcomes for students involved in the project. These two competencies were contextualized in three dimensions: cognitive, activity and affective. Each of these dimensions were further described by using a five level scale ranging from the very basic level of the competence (such as knowing teamwork is required) to the most sophisticated level (such as integrating team competencies into personal and professional life). These contextualized competencies are presented in the LEVEL5 tables for the Turkish Team on the project WEB site. This helped students and teachers in assessing the competencies developed as a result of the project activities for each individual student.

These competencies were assessed in the Spring of 2013 as the project activities became more intense through awareness raising seminars, visits to sites in relation to environment protection and alternative energy use and changes in the school energy, water use. The assessment involved data collection by the teachers in school, questionnaire implementation with students and teachers, interviews with students and teachers, observations and document analysis. These data were analyzed to determine students' beginning and end levels in relation to teamwork and problem solving competencies.

In addition to the data collected from teachers and students for the individual students, teachers and students were also asked to do assessment for these competencies for individual students. Eventually all these inputs were brought together to define students' beginning and end levels in relation to teamwork and problem solving competencies. Ratings for individual students were checked several times based on the data collected by the research assistant in the project and the inputs of students and teachers.

This assessment process worked fine in terms of using various data sources and triangulating all these various data in validating the ratings and respective descriptions for the students' developed competency levels. However, data collection could better be done next time at the beginning of the project as well since both teachers and students had difficult time in remembering and describing their beginning competency levels for this project. In addition, the LEVEL5 system could be introduced to the teachers and students earlier in the project life so that they could continuously collect data to support decisions in relation to the assessment of the competencies of students.

Project Impact and Experiences

Teachers thought that filling out the LEVEL5 forms for each student takes time but it is worth to spend this time since it is descriptive and shows improvement. So the time and effort they spent seem to be worthwhile to both. Since one of them had participated in LEVEL5



workshop in Gottingen, she had a good idea of what LEVEL5 was and in what ways it should be used. Teachers looked at different examples of LEVEL5 competencies and how these competencies were assessed in different learning activity contexts. Teachers thought that many competencies would be relevant to CLIMES Project implementation such as team building, problem solving, communication, leadership, research, etc.

Teachers found the contextualized descriptions of teamwork and problem solving relevant and shared them with students. Students thought both competencies and the levels in three dimensions (cognitive, affective and activity) were relevant to the experiences they went through in the project.

There was concern with the LEVEL5 tool in the minds of teachers. To what degree would they be to the point in assessing students in relation to these two competencies? They were instructed that they could use their own observations and their informal interviews with the students. In fact the two teachers found it useful to discuss

their assessments of each student to make sure that they are not subjective and not missing relevant sources of data. Teachers were also assured that the interviews and observations carried out by the project research assistant could also be used to corroborate their assessment. With this direction, teachers felt more comfortable in assessing students along the LEVEL5 cube.

Students seemed to like the idea of assessing themselves on these competencies since that was the first time they were being assessed descriptively in terms of their informal learning outcomes. One of the effects of using LEVEL5 in Project CLIMES was that students were motivated to take part in similar projects once they learned that they would have a certificate/e-portfolio to document their achievement in this activity. In this sense LEVEL5 can be a motivating factor for other students who think of joining in similar learning activities.

Another effect on students is that LEVEL5 provided them with a way of thinking about the progress they made in relation to team building and problem solving competencies. Conceptualization of their competencies could be helpful in sharing their achievements with significant others such as parents, teachers, future employers, etc.

One effect for the teachers was that they have systematic way of thinking in relation to areas they need to focus on in future learning activities since LEVEL5 helped them see each competence could have different dimensions and each dimension with different level of achievement. Both team building and problem solving competencies are not simply one entity not but a competence with different dimensions and levels. This way of thinking makes it easier for them to plan activities in Clubs for students to make better progress in relation to these competencies. Another effect on teachers is that they have a way of showing to school administrators and parents what they achieve for each student in these extracurricular activities.

Overall, we find that LEVEL5 has been perceived as a useful tool to do self and student assessment in extracurricular activities.

Discussion & Perspectives

The competencies selected for this learning activity (team building and problem solving) will be used to assess participants in other similar extracurricular activities. In fact two additional schools showed interest in using LEVEL5 approach in their extracurricular activities and the descriptions were sent to them in Turkish. One school immedi-

ately started using these competencies within the context of various club activities in school. So this approach could prove effective in the long run in documenting the progress students make in extracurricular activities in many schools since they seem to spend much time and effort in these activities yet do not have a systematic approach to assess and document the learning outcomes students achieve.

In determining the competencies, we had difficult time to choose. There seemed to be too many competencies relevant to the implementation of Project CLIMES in METU School. The two project coordinators thought of different competencies and they discussed these with teachers. Among these were team building, problem solving, communication, leadership, flexibility, learning to learn, conflict management, interpersonal skills, research, global thinking, etc. The number of these competencies and the difficulty we had in choosing the most relevant ones showed that how much we ignored in the past the informal learning outcomes these activities produced and how they went by without sufficient recognition. Then we said an approach like LEVEL5 is certainly necessary to assess and document these learning outcomes since they could as important as (maybe more) content related outcomes. We seem to share this perspective with teachers as well as the two schools that showed interest as soon as they saw the news in the national media in relation to Project VITA. There is a need certainly to establish a system of assessing and certifying these informal learning outcomes in schools.

Assessment of informal outcomes has been much needed action in education of students in schools at all levels. This piloting has shown that the assessment could contribute to validation of these outcomes as well as serve as reflection for students themselves and their teachers. Other schools are also interested in using this system to validate and certify skill development in students through extracurricular activities the schools organize and welcome as part of their overall goal of education.

Ali Yildirim & Hanife Akar, METU

3. VITA – Experiences with LEVEL5

3.1 Introduction/Methodology

The evaluation of the pilot projects revealed many examples of proven practice in informal learning. In all projects competence in regard to SPOC development was recorded and evaluated. The achieved outcomes were based on different project activities, resources, target groups and on a broad variety of methodologies. The topics were chosen according to the interest of the partners and their learners according to their consideration of maximum feasibility to their context. The following table gives an overview of target groups within the different sectors of lifelong learning, the competences that were assessed and the methods used therefore. Detailed descriptions of the experiences made in the partner's pilots are thoroughly discussed in the previous chapters.

	Educational Sector	Target group	Content/topic	Partner
1	Adult education	Unemployed Men from Southhill Men's Shed	Problem solving, leadership and networking	AONTAS, Ireland
2		Organisers of activities for the Swiss learning festival	communication skills and project management, Planning and organizing an event	SVEB, Switzerland
3	VET	Staff of a socio-economic enterprise (restaurant TOP Lokal in Vienna)	Customer orientation	Die Berater, Austria
4		Prison inmates	Leadership and tolerance	Insup, France
5		VET trainers	Communication and self-reflection	AuTh, Greece
6		Nurses in elderly care	Coping with stress	BUPNET, Germany
7		Employees of supermarkets	Customer orientation for customers with cognitive disorders	BUPNET, Germany
8		Employees of supermarkets	Customer orientation for customers with cognitive disorders	BlinC, Germany
9	Higher education	Students	Communication	VMU, Lithuania
10		Managers of child care	Inclusion leadership	VIA, Denmark
11	Schools	Students in extra-curricular activities	Teamwork and problem solving	METU, Turkey

Table 2: List of learning projects evaluated in VITA

The competence development evaluations in the VITA pilot projects provided a basis of experiences by applying the LEVEL5 methodology in different sectors of education and different learning projects. The VITA partners reported about benefits and obstacles of the approach. In the following, these experiences are summarised and discussed. In order to receive an additional and also more systematic feedback with regard to the practical aspects of the application two evaluation instruments were applied to get a thorough feedback on the partners' experiences:

- A quantitative questionnaire
- A pattern with guiding questions for a narrative experience report.

The quantitative questionnaire includes the following sections:

- Usefulness/helpfulness
- Practicability
- Effort
- Transferability
- Pre-knowledge and skills of staff

Each section contains statements which could be rated on a scale from “very much“ to “not at all“. The pattern for narrative experience reports substantiates to the quantitative findings and includes the following sections:

- Usability and feasibility
- Effort and acceptance
- Pre-knowledge and skills of staff
- Transferability

Each section contains leading questions aiming to assess detailed aspects with regard to the different topics. The full narrative experience reports are found in annex 1, partners pilot and experience report. The results of both assessments, which were carried out in the last phase of the project, are taken into account in the following considerations. The results presented below represent experiences made by the 10 VITA partners in 11 piloting projects and reflect views of four academic researchers, four education practitioners and two representatives of national umbrella organisations in the field of education.

3.2 Usefulness and helpfulness of LEVEL5

The first block of questions in the quantitative questionnaire was addressing the usefulness and helpfulness of LEVEL5 in regard to the partner's working contexts and processes.

The LEVEL5 approach has been applied successfully in all projects in the partners' contexts. All partners achieved good results when applying the LEVEL5 evaluation methodology. Consequently, the usability of LEVEL5 was highly appreciated in terms of *very much* and *much* „relevancy in the project context” by the majority of partners. Concerning „improvement of work processes” as well as support for „project personnel to justify their work” are considered very much or much relevant by most partners. Almost all respondents found working with LEVEL5 *very much* or *much* helpful „to develop their competences” and especially „to provide documentation/evidencing in their learning projects” (see figure 1 below). Lower scores of usability have been appreciated on the support for *daily routine*, which is inversely correlated with the *time and effort* indicator. In other words, partners noted that is hard for the methodology to be integrated in daily routine as long as it proves to consume much effort & time to be implemented. It is expected that LEVEL5 will be applied as a daily routine methodology if it takes less effort & time as result of growing experience and security with the approach.

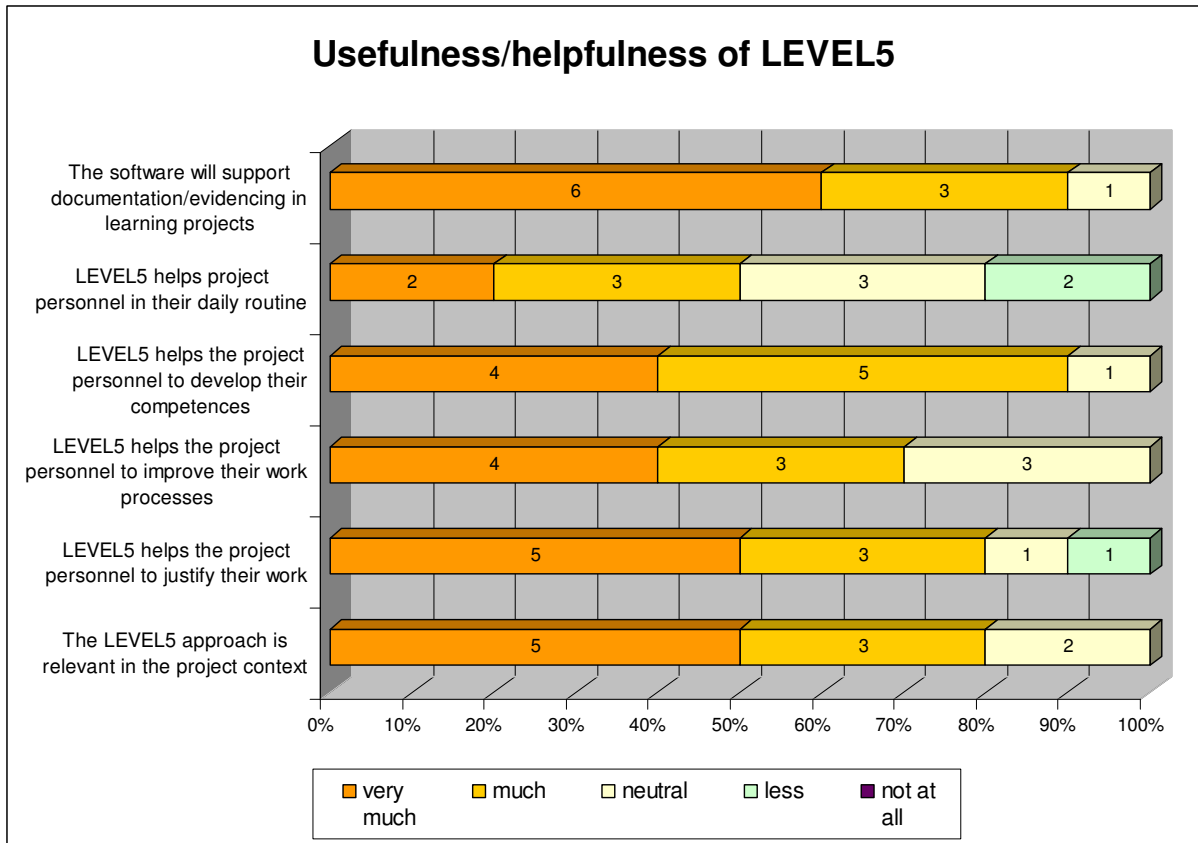


Figure 1: Usefulness of LEVEL5

The overall positive feedback from the quantitative survey in regard to the usability of the approach is reflected by narrative statements from the experience reports.

Most of VITA partners provide evidence in their reports that LEVEL5 is a satisfactory system to assess the learning outcomes of individual participants in their learning offers. They do believe that the 3D system offered by LEVEL5 is a suitable approach to describe competence developments against predefined reference systems in their different working fields.

All partners coincided that the LEVEL5 system helped them to display the impact of their work. Overall, most partners are satisfied with the results of LEVEL5 assessments in their pilot projects in regard to learning outcomes as well as with the method's features in regard to planning and evidencing the success of their work as expressed by following statements:

“LEVEL5 is a valuable tool in the VET system and for the development of learning offers. It is essential to consider the before and after situation and to document it. The documentation process is challenging but very clear, transparent and useful. Social and personal competences are seen by employers as essential and it is

very important to be aware of that. They are a part of personality and LEVEL5 contributes to personal development, awareness of the competences and to more success for people and for companies.” Die Berater, Austria

*“The team considers the LEVEL5 was very useful and relevant to determinate precisely the situation of each trainee: that is to say to formalise the informal learning. The Level 5 was very helpful to tell the Prison Authorities how the prisoners advanced on the training course on an individual point of view and within the group”
Insup, France*

“Using the system in partly self-assessment way combined with partial expert discussions and counselling is feasible in assessing non-formal achievements of social competences in practical work placement in HE.” VMU, Lithuania

*“Overall, we find that LEVEL5 has been perceived as a useful tool to do self- and student assessment of competency development in extracurricular activities.”
Metu, Turkey*

Partners' experience reports also cast a light on the perception of the learners:

“The learners were curious of their learning curve, how far they could get from the start to the end of the training using the LEVEL5 system. The general attitude to the forms was positive. Even though some participants are not used to fill in forms, to reflect on themselves etc. they realised that they could analyse themselves and become more aware of their skills and use the methodology also in the future, in particular when they are looking for a new job.” Die Berater, Austria

“Participants' efforts were eased by the fact that a self-assessment questionnaire related to certain levels of each dimension was prepared for them. Their achievements were easily transferred into questions that were connected to respective levels. Therefore students embraced the self-assessment willingly and eager to receive assessment of their social competence. They found it mostly easy to answer the questions, but also need guidance and certain amount of counseling as well.” VMU, Lithuania

“The learners definitely benefitted from the project in terms of its relevance. A hands-on approach was adopted, and it is advised that each centre adopting this programme looks at the optimum way of working with the respective groups, i.e. is

it theory-based or more practice-based learning. This project revolved entirely around an event where it was easy to justify the need to develop the skills of leadership, problem-solving and networking. The approach to marking was explained to participants at the end of the programme and all seemed happy with it. There was a fear about some marks being higher than others in the group and the opportunity for everyone to know how well each learner performed. This was discussed and solved in the marking briefing session.” AONTAS, Ireland

“The immediate effect of using LEVEL5 was explained by the trainers who formulated the goals and indicators for ‘customer orientation’. Reflections of the participants show that they understand the meaning of customer orientation in a broader way. In the first interview they focused on the term customer orientation in a very abstract way. Then the awareness of their competences boosted and participants became more self-confident and were thinking which other competences they have unconsciously developed. The impact will be visible even more in the future. The first step to self-awareness has been done and further steps will be necessary to improve and recognize other competences on the same basis.” Die Berater, Austria

One of the effects of using LEVEL5 in Project CLIMES was that students were motivated to take part in similar projects once they learned that they would have a certificate/e-portfolio to document their achievement in this activity. In this sense LEVEL5 can be a motivating factor for other students who think of joining in similar learning activities. The documentation of their competencies could be helpful in sharing their achievements with significant others such as parents, teachers, future employers, etc.” METU, Turkey

The acceptance of the learners to take part in the evaluations is stated by all partners. Many also stress the beneficial effect of self-reflection on SPOC against the predefined and contextualized reference systems, which stimulates motivation for further learning and awareness for ones' individual competence development. Also being able to evidence these developments is of high value to some groups of learners, especially young people and those looking for employment.

Not only the view of partners and learners was assessed, but also how the approach was perceived by external personnel not yet familiar with the method, who is involved in the process, like teachers or trainers. Of course more or less introductory

effort has to be invested, depending on the role and the degree of involvement in the planning and execution of the assessment activities of the external. The way this worked is expressed by exemplary partner statements:

“The lecturer immediately found the LEVEL5 approach interesting and relevant, she quickly comprehended the way LEVEL5 is constructed by the example of reflectivity competence, which made good sense for her. Her process of constructing a goals and indicators was also a process of making sense of it in the particular context she wanted to use it in, namely organizational perspectives on leading inclusion.” VIA, Denmark

“After the choice of the 2 competencies “Leadership” and “Tolerance”, the trainers understood the systematic approach. Because we decided to leave for a while on the side the approach to observe the group and not to interfere on the formal learning, the only difficulty was that the trainers could not hold the training and in the same time, apply the observation grid. That’s the reason why, we had one or two consultations per week to keep a link with the approach and our observations.” Insup, France

“Teachers did not have much difficulty in using the LEVEL5 system in assessing students` competencies since one of them already had participated in LEVEL5 training in Gottingen, and they were assisted by the VITA Project partners in Turkey.” METU, Turkey

“Trainers were impressed by the LEVEL5 system. They discussed during the workshop that various competences can be measured by participants before and after a learning situation. It is a thinking process and self-reflection for all participants.” Die Berater, Austria

What makes LEVEL5 unique is its’ three dimensional approach that regards not only the cognitive and active dimension of learning, but also includes the attitudal or affective state, which is highly relevant when it comes to apply ones competences. This view is shared by the VITA partners.

“Regarding the results of the evaluation, the focus on the three dimensions of learning as displayed in LEVEL5 allow a broader and more complete perspective on learning of SPOC, as for these competences the affective dimension seems to

be crucial and thus needs to be taken into account when thinking about competence development in general.” BUPNET, Germany

It turns out that depending on context and competence certain dimensions of learning are easier or more difficult to evaluate.

“The 3D-stage system was a suitable approach to describe competence development of our trainees in prison. This training course was a very concrete action and the objectives were very clear since the beginning as extra-possibilities for them: salary, qualification, shorten the stay in prison, work placement. So, the teamwork didn't have to motivate them at all to act or to be in daily life in community. Moreover in prison, emotions are palpable. The observation on the 3D-stage system was facilitated.” Insup, France

In regard to the need for external consultancy

“Setting up the materials becomes easier the more experience one has. Most difficult was the creation of questionnaires that allow grounded ratings of the competence development. Here the experience is that several checks and feedbacks by external persons are necessary in order to get an adequate tool.” BUPNET, Germany

Partners stress the importance of choosing the right assessment method for the collection of data, as the assessment approach is closely connected to the objectivity and adequacy of results. In this regard different views prevail, dependant on the context and target groups partners worked with.

“Multiple methods of data collections appear to be critical in assessing students' developed competencies in a more reliable and valid way since self-perceptions or individual teacher perceptions could be subjective to certain degree and that might create a validity threat to the assessments. However, when these assessments are corroborated by other data sources such as interviews and observations, the assessment then can be more valid. METU, Turkey

“Crucial are the assessment methods that are decisive for the quality of the results. Also knowledge about the target group and their preconditions towards learning in general and certain contents is helpful for setting up materials that are adequate to the learners' background (contextualization). Further it is crucial that

the reference system and the assessment instruments are synchronized in order to allow grounded statements about the learning progress and a certain degree of standardization in the rating procedure in order to make it time efficient.” BUP-NET, Germany

The approach should be chosen according to specifics of target group and learning context, i.e. if the competence evaluation is part of a learning activity or on the side of other activities. Also it is determined by how much access and time the evaluator has to spend with the learners as well as the purpose of the validation. These and other factors need to be considered when choosing the assessment method.

*“One suggestion to improve the process of evaluating big numbers of learners is to use neutral learning outcome descriptions, using for instance “the participant” or “the learner”, instead of changing the name of the participant in the descriptions every time. It is time consuming and errors are easy to occur. Also, in case of pure self-assessment, the system could offer just pre-formatted learning outcomes without the summary of the learning process and the summary of the evaluation.”
BlinC, Germany*

3.3 Practicability and effort of LEVEL5

According to the results of the quantitative experience reports the practicability of LEVEL5 is very much dependent on the degree of „understanding” and much dependent on „routine” and „helping tools”. Though the sum of answers (8 of 10) states that LEVEL5 is very well understandable, many partners agree, that help tools are very much and much required, but 9 of 10 agree that routine definitively helps to apply the method faster. The attitude towards the need for an external consultant is commonly seen necessary by 6 of 10. Partners consider that external consulting would be necessary especially for first-time users to understand the whole procedure (see figure 2 below).

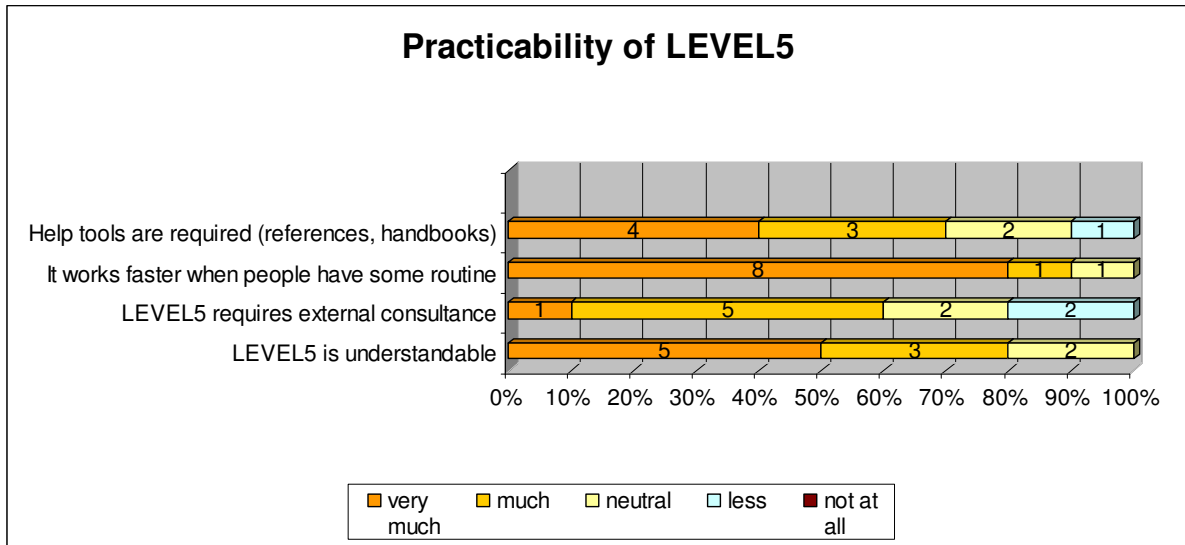


Figure 2: Practicability

All partners agree that LEVEL5 is complex. While some, particularly those that have knowledge in competence development and evaluation and/or a logical mind find it easier to understand and follow it, others with less background have found themselves in the initial stages of training and application a little bit overwhelmed by the initial complexity. The pilots have shown that different grades of complexity can be covered and in any case lead to reasonable results. 7 of 10 partners appreciate that LEVEL5 considerably affords effort and has a good input-output ratio. Some opinions do not emphasise a balance between input-output, but at the same time are able to distinguish between the hardest and the easiest parts, which is related to the pre-knowledge and skills of the staff (see figure 3 and figure 5 below).

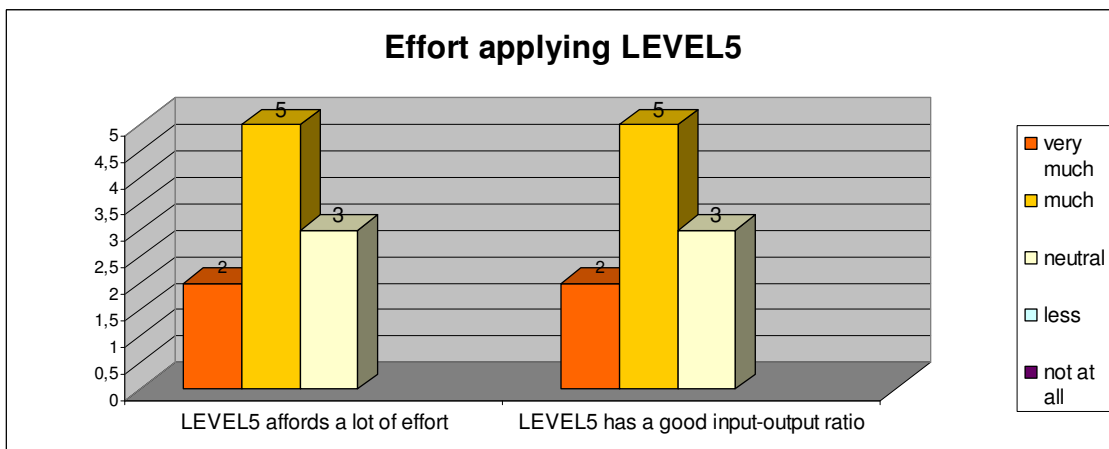


Figure 3: Effort applying LEVEL5

The lowest effort and time consuming tasks were selection and refinement of the relevant topics and inserting data of 1 person per competence while the highest effort and time consuming tasks were assessments and completing one 3 D-system (reference system) for one topic/competence (see figure 4 below).

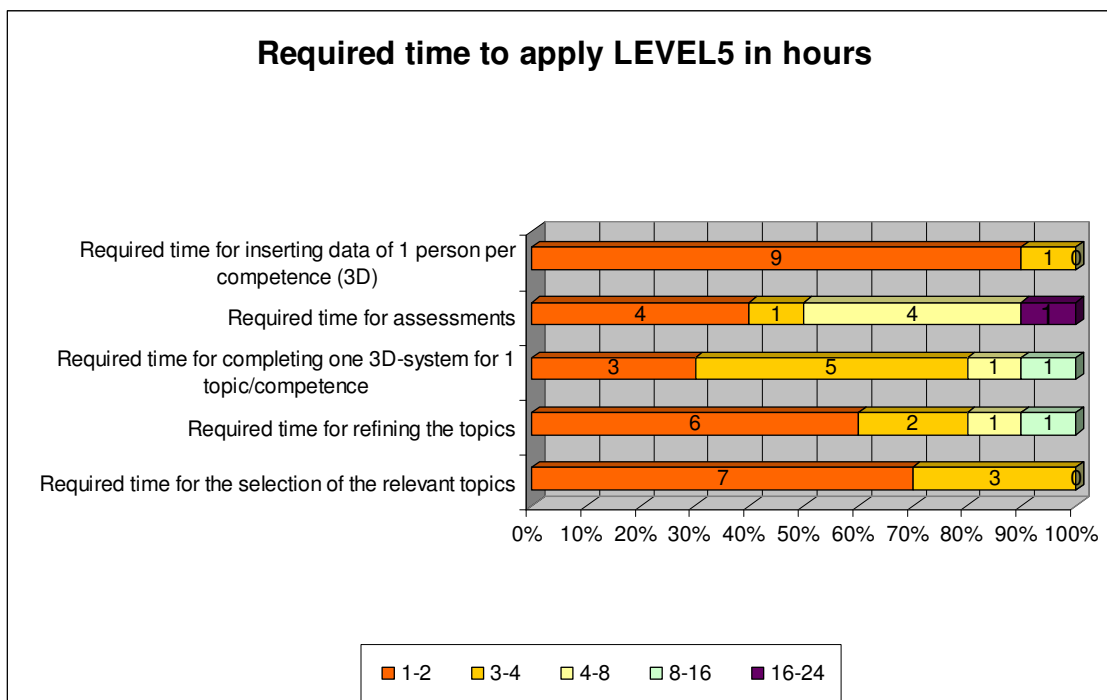


Figure 4: time needed to apply LEVEL5

Statements from the experience reports in relation to the effort and time required to apply LEVEL5 underline the quantitative results and are to be summarised as following: According to partners, a good input-output ratio can be achieved for those who already have training and guidance expertise. Also if the procedure is to be repeated or to be applied on a considerable number of persons, a good input-output ratio can be achieved. The statements differ between partners that have experience in using LEVEL5 and those who are new comers. The time efficiency very much depends on the group size, the number of competences assessed, the methods of assessment and the time available for assessment. Thus the input – output ratio and the perspectives for further use are diverse:

“The effort spent seems to be acceptable to most. The Lecturer explained that she thought about the competences and indicators for ‘Leading Inclusion’ for some days and then formulated the form within one and a half hours, which she found quite acceptable.” VIA, Denmark

“Timewise the setting up and refinement of the reference system took about 1,5 working days, one day initially including research on the described competence and another few hours to refine it according to the answers received, which provided further insights into the topic and needed to be integrated into the learning outcome description. The creation of the questionnaire was the hardest part and took about two days. The analysis of the results and the ratings, including reasoning was also time consuming as the questionnaire was quite complex and indicators were very individual, which made it difficult to standardise the rating procedure. Due to the number of learners assessed, the definition of the rating procedure and writing the learning outcome descriptions took approximately 3 days.”
BUPNET, GmbH

“A concise introduction of LEVEL5 system in 3 dimensions and 5 levels has taken about 30 min, self-assessment before the placement has taken 15-20 minutes and additional counseling in most cases. Assessment after the placement has taken the same amount. The longest time input was required for attribution of student answers to respective levels of the system and afterwards discussion with the participants in order to clarify the understanding and explain results.” VMU, Lithuania

All assessment was done using the LEVEL5 approach. The tutor doesn't plan on using it in other learning activities, as it was quite time-consuming to utilise (90 marking sheets in total as opposed to one sheet per learner). There has been some discussion of progressing with the learners using some of the other competencies to assess, and if this is done, then the LEVEL5 framework will be used. As mentioned above the principal limitation is the lengthy evaluation process. A tick-box approach didn't abbreviate matters as each of the 9 points marked for each learner had to be justified.” AONTAS, Ireland

“Overall, the input-output ratio was very good and there is a potential to improve our work as LEVEL5 service providers. Also, we experienced the gaining of a certain routine in creating the pre-formatted learning outcomes, making us believe that such activity will be always less and less time consuming.” Blinc, Germany

Another question of interest was in how far the learners need to be informed about the entire procedure. It was observable that learners are open and interested when being presented the LEVEL5 approach, appreciating the stimulus to reflect on their competences in different dimensions, anyway it is not a precondition to achieve good results.

“Most of the learners did not hold a high education degree and none of them had previous experience with competence assessment systems. Nevertheless, they did not have any particular problem in understanding the assessment process and the tasks. We experienced that explaining the system too in details before the training and the practical phase is not worth it since, usually, participants have difficulties in understanding the concept outside the context of the training or before experiencing a learning development. Therefore, a short presentation introducing the system and explaining what will happen at the end is sufficient. On the contrary, at the end of the learning activity, a more in deep explanation of the approach was considered interesting and meaningful by most participants. In particular, it helped them realising their learning development.” Blinc, Germany

That the application of LEVEL5 serves as learning space for all involved is stressed by several partners. This reflects in the generally high acceptance of external stakeholders and colleagues:

“The team did have the feeling to learn about their way to observe trainees and the acuity of judgement on them. Our view on detainees had an influence on the good results of the training. For our team it was the first experience with this methodology. The most difficult step was to identify two topics and above all keep a good balance in the fact of thinking permanently to LEVEL5 and be natural not to overplay one or the other subjects. The team that applied it had to take some extra time in order to familiarise with the reference system content, but in the end, the LEVEL5 has been perceived as a useful tool in extracurricular activities. So the effort was real all along the training course and sometimes a bit time-consuming but the result was very finally interesting: the input-output ratio was good beyond our hopes.” Insup, France

“The system is extremely practicable and the outcomes are widely accepted. At beginning, one concern was that the participants would have found the description of their learning outcomes too neutral and impersonal. On the contrary, all trainers, partners and participants though that the certificates really showed their learning process. In particular, during the final conference, the blinc team carried out a few interviews to assess the acceptance and the relevance of LEVEL5 certificates. All participants interviewed expressed very high appreciation for the training and the LEVEL5 certificate that explained their learning development. They thought that the certificate clearly reflected their journey and also helped them re-

alise it, when they received it they felt proud and got emotional. One of them said that she would hang it on her counter and all of them had already talked about it with their colleagues. They stated that, once it was explained to them, the system was not hard to understand and they appreciated the guidance during the assessment. The trainer that was interviewed is a psychologist and, even if he was not familiar with the system, said that it seemed extremely fitting to the training methodology that he used, in particular for role-plays and group works. Finally, the supermarkets' responsible expressed great appreciation for the outcomes of the training, including LEVEL5 assessment and are willing to buy the training package for other supermarkets". Blinc, Germany

"One effect for the teachers was that they have systematic way of thinking in relation to areas they need to focus on in future learning activities since LEVEL5 helped them see each competence could have different dimensions and each dimension with different level of achievement. Both team building and problem solving competencies are not simply one entity, but a competence with different dimensions and levels. This way of thinking makes it easier for them to plan activities in Clubs for students to make better progress in relation to these competencies. Another effect on teachers is that they have a way of showing to school administrators and parents what they achieve for each student in these extracurricular activities." METU, Turkey

"For the teachers and the trainer, the LEVEL5 allows them to be more complete and accurate when you have to speak to detainees within the group or in individual interviews. With this target group (prisoners) for instance, you can't say "I disagree with your way to be a leader in this group": your security can not be ensured. Therefore if you can substantiate your communication on the basis of grids including data carefully considered, you're 1) limiting the risk 2) becoming credible. That's one the immediate effect: you take care of your communication." Insup, France"

3.4 Preconditions and required pre-knowledge of personnel

The implementation of the LEVEL5 methodology by educators is mainly judged as *very much* to *much* accessible for project staff experienced in the field of evaluation. 9 of 10 partners agree that knowledge on assessment methods and their implementation are *very much* and *much* required in order to reach satisfying results.

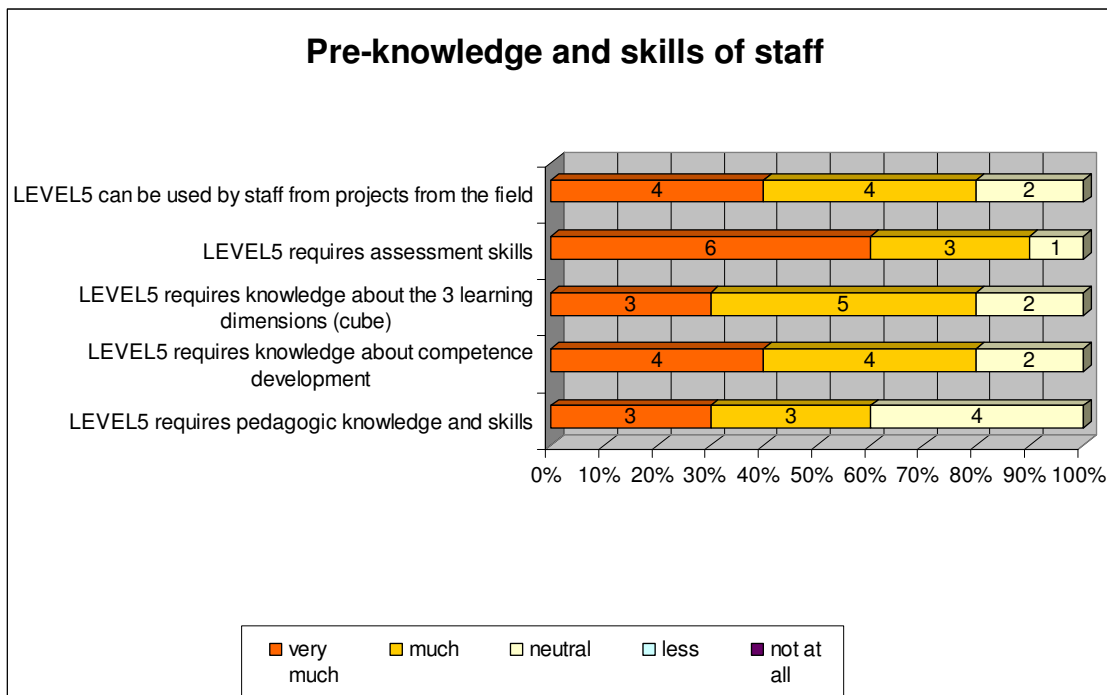


Figure 5: Required Skills and pre-knowledge

On the question if knowledge of the three dimensions of competence learning is needed to apply LEVEL5 the majority agrees (8 of 10), but it's not considered necessary by all (see Figure 5). The same proportion of partners agreed that overall knowledge about competence development is helpful in order to use the system successfully while little more than half of the respondents see pedagogic knowledge as a precondition for the application.

“The instrument is clear and well structured and organised. It is accessible and easy to understand from the first instant. All together – especially the self-evaluation section as most trainers have noted – is comprehensive and useful as it gives the opportunity to trainers and educators to look upon certain issues they haven't thought before.” AuTh, Greece

“LEVEL5 requires a good deal of learning and practice. In our case, one of the teachers participated in a workshop on LEVEL5 and that made the transition from the concept of assessment to actual practice of assessment went smoothly. In addition the good communication among the partner teachers leading the learning activity was essential in sharing experiences and collaborating on the tasks to be accomplished. So we suggest that an introduction seminar on LEVEL5 for the teachers would be essential.” METU, Turkey

“LEVEL5 requires a good level of learning and practice. In our case, the coordinator of INSUP participated in a workshop on LEVEL5 and made the link with the new team. In addition the good communication among the partner teachers and trainer leading the learning activity was essential in sharing experiences and collaborating on the tasks to be accomplished.” Insup, France

“In our case the evaluator was experienced in the use of LEVEL5. By this experience it can be said that a repeated application helps a lot to become more secure and aware of strengths and limits of the procedure. Crucial are the assessment methods that are decisive for the quality of the results. Also knowledge about the target group and their preconditions towards learning in general and certain contents is helpful for setting up materials that are adequate to the learners’ background (contextualization).” BUPNET, Germany

Different views have been uttered by partners as it refers to what is the best way to learn to apply LEVEL5:

Training should include theory and practice; it should develop pros and cons of different procedures and assessment methods, the use the reference systems, to know the meaning of the different levels to be able to adapt them to their target group. Also the formulation of reasoning and arguments to convince participants to open up to the assessment of their competence development are suggested as elements for training. This reflects the initial training inputs VITA partners received in preparation to the piloting.

3.5 Transferability of LEVEL5

LEVEL5 is appreciated as having a high potential for transferability into other social and educational projects, generally into other projects in partner’s field of activity as well as into other regions/countries. The results are insofar very encouraging since almost all answers regarding transferability ranked between “very much” and “much” (9 of 10). The transfer of the approach to other learning projects has already been carried out by 8 of the 10 VITA partners. As some were to use the approach for the first time they therefore didn’t have the chance yet to transfer it to other projects but declare to be willing to do so in their experience reports, given that certain preconditions are fulfilled. The use of LEVEL5 system in the future is for many dependent on economical resources to cover the expert costs and on finding ways to overcome the limits of time and staff. The system itself they consider very valuable.

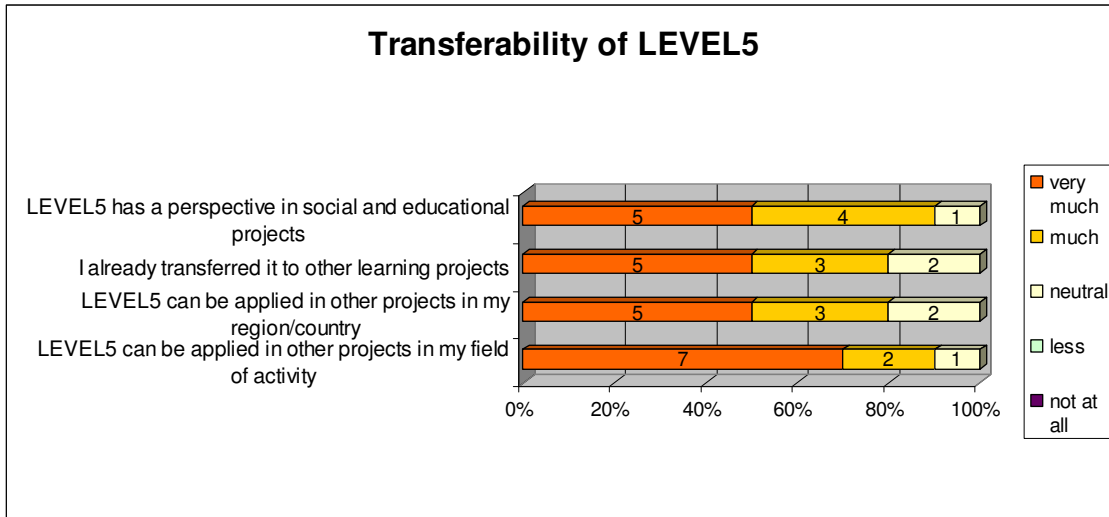


Figure 6: Transferability of LEVEL5 to other projects

During the lifetime of VITA partners have tested LEVEL5 in overall 11 learning projects in all sectors of lifelong learning. A great amount of different experiences and good practice could be derived from the pilots in regard to the impact for the design of SPOC directed learning offers but also in regard to the different assessment approaches, specifics of target groups and benefits for certain types of learners. Therefore most partners are open to transfer the approach to further projects or reuse the concepts developed in VITA:

The system is flexible and very relevant to our training centre. In the VET sector, the fact is that the trainers have the obligation to evaluate the trainees and so tools are available. The LEVEL5 methodology's flexibility allows its users to adapt to the target groups and competences or levels." Insup, France

"I have applied LEVEL5 in a number of contexts and with different target groups. Each time one has to set up new concepts, decide on competences to assess and contextualise them to the learners. Same with the assessment methods, that need to be chosen based on context and accessibility to the learners and maybe need to be created especially for certain purposes. Generally transferability is given. The method is open enough to be transferred to whichever learning activity. The transfer becomes easier and faster if one has experience and some sovereignty in the use of it." Bupnet, Germany

"The LEVEL5 for social competences may be transferred to other contexts in higher education, but certain work and time input is necessary in each case." VMU, Lithuania

Even external stakeholders got interested and decided to apply the approaches developed within VITA, as LEVEL5 is perceived as filling a gap when it comes to document and validate SPOC developments of their learner's:

“The competencies selected for this learning activity (team building and problem solving) will be used to assess participants in other similar extracurricular activities. In fact two additional schools showed interest in using LEVEL5 approach in their extracurricular activities and the descriptions were sent to them in Turkish. One school immediately started using these competencies within the context of various club activities in school. So this approach could prove effective in the long run in documenting the progress students make in extracurricular activities in many schools since they seem to spend much time and effort in these activities yet do not have a systematic approach to assess and document the learning outcomes students achieve.” METU, Turkey

“The LEVEL5 for ‘Leading Inclusion’ will be adopted by our lecturers. Schematic methods are more and more adopted in the field of pedagogy and schematic management methods are reintroduced in leading, so I expect that there might be an interest for LEVEL5 in the general area as well as at VIA University College. On the other hand, a sceptical attitude toward it – similar to the attitude expressed by one of the participants – also exists.” VIA, Denmark

“The reference system “client orientation in relation to clients with cognitive disorders” could be used by other assessing personnel. One of the main results of the SuperMAN project in Italy is that the managers of the supermarket chain have already expressed their intention to buy the training package, including the LEVEL5 approach, to implement it in an extended and systematic way in all the supermarkets of the region they are in charge.” Blinc, Germany

“It’s a really very good tool also for the labor market. The result is shown at one glance.” SVEB, Switzerland

3.6 Conclusions and recommendations of the VITA pilot experiences with LEVEL5

To conclude the findings of quantitative and qualitative experience reports in regard to experiences and possible improvements of the procedure some general statements can be derived and some suggestions for further developments wind up this report.

The experiences of the VITA project proved that LEVEL5 can be applied successfully in all sectors of lifelong learning. LEVEL5 has the advantage that it is a very flexible method that can be applied to many different competences, settings and target groups. Variables that determine the effort needed for the evaluation process are the given experience of users, the availability of materials such as predefined and perhaps already contextualised reference systems, specifics of the target group of learners, the learning contexts and the accessibility of learners by the assessor.

Also LEVEL5 offers a relevant approach to evaluate competence development of SPOC by raising awareness of all persons involved for the examined competences and the issue of informal learning in general, which stimulates the competence development and learning process of the users. A smaller role it plays for justification of ones own work and as support tool for the daily routine. Also LEVEL5 is a learning space for the evaluators themselves.

In the beginning a number of different supporting materials are necessary (i.e. manual, learning suites, reference systems). The existing instruments were considered sufficient by all partners but face to face training was also highly appreciated. In the future support and training will be accessible through the REVEAL network offering guidance in all aspects of the evaluation of SPOC development in different contexts. Also the platform my-VITA.eu will provide access to materials and guidelines.

All partners agree that an increase in routine substantially helps and simplifies the application. The time effort is mainly on the assessment side if preformatted reference systems are used, but strongly depends on the methods chosen for data assessment. Of course setting up a new reference system for other purposes is time consuming and needs profound theoretical basing but once the work is done can be applied quickly. Also some partners point out that it is crucial that the reference system and the assessment instruments are synchronized in order to allow grounded statements about the learning progress and a certain degree of standardization in the rating procedure in order to make it time efficient.

The effort of the application is described as becoming lesser the more experience one has and the higher the number of learners evaluated within one project is. Of course it is not really time effective to set up an evaluation scheme and reference systems for few persons only. One partner, dealing with a high number of learners, invented a new approach for rating by providing pre-formulated learning outcome descriptions that were to be reasoned by the learners by giving indicators for each level of achievement.

Furthermore the characteristics of certain target groups have to be taken into consideration. Variables to consider are age and position of the learner in professional life, their educational backgrounds, access and quality of contact between the evaluator and the learners. A good example are the learners from the Southill Men's Shed for whom the wording of the competence descriptions had to be adjusted in a less abstract way in order to help them understand as well as giving them support in reasoning their competence development.

The experiences of VITA show that it is not necessary that the entire evaluation process lies in one hand. It's possible to transfer parts of the work to external stakeholders, like in the case of the kindergarden manager - project from Denmark, where VIA involved the lecturers or in the case of AONTAS, who cooperated with trainers on community level.

To motivate learners to seriously participate in the procedure, especially in the assessment it is necessary to point out the respective benefits. This has strong impact on the quality and depth of results that can be achieved. Also competence descriptions, indicators and levelling should be adapted to the respective target group.

If possible to integrate the assessment into the learning activities, like in the Danish case or with long-term unemployed in Austria, the impact in terms of reflection and learning can be enforced.

When time limits play a role or access of the evaluator to the learners is limited retrospective assessments are possible to deliver reliable results, as shown in the German case of nurses in elderly care. In this case it is important to choose adequate methods of assessment, that allow to ask deepening questions and to stimulate the participants' memory like interviews.

In terms of methods used there is a great variety to choose from with various effort required. Interviews and questionnaires for self-assessments were most frequently used. The experiences and the discussions among the partnership point at the notion that Self-assessments are much more effective if guided and supported. This offers the option to discuss with the participants while doing the self-rating, additional explanations help avoiding misunderstandings of reference systems.

Questionnaires are difficult to construct so they serve to reflect reliable meaning of the results, often they are limited in expression. On the other hand they're easy and effective to use. In some cases it may be easier to use reference system and level descriptions directly, maybe reformulated in an understandable manner for participants. Gen-

erally it is highly recommended to work with practically tested materials to be sure to receive results in good quality.

The demand of the learners for getting proof of their competence development varies. Certificates have been seen as highly important, as in the case of the Lithuanian students, who see a benefit in having proof of their communication competence for their career path. In other cases certificates were considered completely irrelevant. This was the case for the Danish kindergarden managers and the organisers of the Swiss Lernfestival, but also for a number of German supermarket staff. Nevertheless, even if certificates have no formal relevance for the learners they are broadly appreciated as feedback on the learners progress and matrix to further reflect on different qualities of SPOC. Many partners already have or will transfer the LEVEL5 approach to other projects or partner institutions.

The full experience reports of the partners can be assessed in annex 2.

4. Summary and conclusions of the VITA pilots

It appears that there is an ever-increasing interest concerning personal, social, and organisational competences (SPOC). Employers are very aware of the importance that employees' SPOC have for their carrying out of their jobs, and they see SPOC as an increasingly important area for successful performance in an increasingly competitive world of labour. These are the very clear indications that have come out of a survey carried out by partners in the VITA project. In addition and probably corresponding to the increasing demand for SPOC in the economy, SPOC is seeing a growing interest in the world of education.

This emphasizes the relevance of not only developing SPOC individually, but also systematically following its development in various types of learning and training programs. The VITA partners have worked with the development of SPOC in eleven very different learning contexts and measured the SPOC development of the individual participants. This has been done through the use of LEVEL5, a method that allows for a procedural description of competences across three dimensions: cognitive, activity and affective. LEVEL5 can also be used in the formulation of what makes up a given competence, just as it can be used as a measure of the learner's competence development. This chapter sums up the VITA partners' evaluations of their individual pilots in different sectors of education with LEVEL5.

This chapter focuses on the following themes:

- Learning contexts.
- The competences assessed
- Integration and effects of the use of LEVEL5 in the learning activities
- Assessment methods and participant response to the assessment
- Usability
- Further impact

4.1 A great variety of learning contexts

In the VITA project, LEVEL5 has been applied in very different learning contexts ranging from 11th-12th-grade volunteer students in a "Club GREEN" (Turkey) and adult volunteers at a learning festival (Switzerland) to students on an obligatory practice placement during their BA education as counsellors (Lithuania) and workplace-related courses for supermarket employees (Germany and Italy), employees at nursing homes

(Germany) and managers in day care centres (Denmark) whose employers had a strong expectation that they were going to participate.

Furthermore, two very different job training programs for long-term unemployed people were part of the project's piloting activities: job training for hotel and restaurant employees (Austria) and a men's group from a deprived local area, where networking activities were arranged. The final two projects were done in relation to a sewing course for a group of prisoners (France) and in a project aiming at validating the competences of adult educators (Greece). As it appears from this, there is great variety when it comes to both target group and institutional context and thus also the intended aims and learning outcomes of the learning activities as well as participant motives to take part.

For instance, the aim of the French prisoners was to qualify for work in the prison and thus improve their own conditions and – for some – maybe for early release. For the long-term unemployed in Austria and the Irish men's group, the aim was to gain a foothold on the labour market, whereas the students in Turkey were motivated by the possibility to work closely with their teachers and be able to function as tutors for their peers and contribute to a greener environment.

4.2 The competences

Even though the learning contexts were so diverse, several concrete competences recur across the projects.

Customer orientation was evaluated in three projects: the German and Italian projects for supermarket employees learning to deal with mentally handicapped customers, and in the Austrian project, customer orientation had a double function; it was naturally a competence in the meeting with guests and associates, but it was also highly relevant in their job search processes in relation to a prospective employer.

Communication was a key competence for the students who were training to become counsellors in Lithuania, just as it was one of three competences that Greek adult educators rated themselves on. The other two in that pilot were **self-reflection** and **problem solving**. **Problem solving** recurred in Turkey together with **teamwork** where the volunteers – among other things – wanted to measure CO₂ emissions and for the Irish men, the aim was to arrange a networking event. Here, **networking** was obviously a relevant competence, but also **leadership** in the very special way in which it could be

developed in the very group oriented context of the Irish men's group. In the French prison, **leadership** and **tolerance** were chosen. These competences aligned well with the affective aims of the sewing course, e.g. acceptance of others and the acquisition of general behaviour adapted to a work environment. However, the intention of choosing these competences was also to provoke a discussion concerning the aim of the training among the stakeholders and participants. In the Danish project for kindergarten leaders, a special competence was formulated: **inclusion leadership** specifically aimed at leading the inclusion of handicapped children into regular Danish kindergartens. At the Swiss learning festival the volunteers got their development of competences in **planning** and **organizing** recognized, and women working at nursing homes assessed how they had strengthened their ability to **cope with stress**, which is crucial in order to permanently work in their field of palliative care.

In this way, the different pilots evaluated both competences that were clearly and directly related to the targeted learning outcomes of the learning activities, e.g. customer orientation, communication, problem solving, networking and inclusion leadership, but also competences that more indirectly supported and underpinned the activity, e.g. 'customer orientation' in relation to employers in the Austrian pilot, and 'leadership' among prisoners on the sewing course as well as in the Irish men's group.

4.3 Integration and effect of the use of LEVEL5 in the learning activities

The use of LEVEL5 did have an effect on all the learning activities no matter whether LEVEL5 had been taken into consideration already in the planning of the activity or not included until later. As expected, the reports generally show that participants become more conscious and aware of their own competences and how they evolve over time.

In the Irish project, the aims of the individual sessions in the eight-week activity were directly related to aims in the competence descriptions of LEVEL5, e.g. from 'understanding what networking is', that is the cognitive dimension of the competence 'networking', to 'hosting a networking event' as the final level. This, among other things, requires LEVEL5 in the activity dimension of networking. In the Austrian and the Danish activities, LEVEL5 was also at the base of the planning although not quite as directly as in the Irish project. The instructor in the course on inclusion leadership for day care leaders prepare for theoretical introductions against the background of the cube she had substantiated and let the participants use the cube as a tool for reflection first in connection with her lecture and finally at the end of an action learning process. In

this way, LEVEL5 was totally integrated into the pedagogical planning of these activities.

LEVEL5 was superimposed on already existing activities in the French prison, in the volunteer Club Green in Turkey, and in the practice placements of the Lithuanian bachelor students. However, by using LEVEL5, new dimensions were added to the activities and courses. By adding measurement of leadership and tolerance into the sewing training, the inmates got access to discussing themes that were controversial and provocative in the prison context. The Turkish 11th and 12th grade students were given a way of thinking about the progress they made in teambuilding as well as problem solving competences. It was also the case in for the volunteers at the Swiss learning festival and for the employees at the Italian supermarkets. In this way, the use of LEVEL5 aided conceptualizing competences and increased their awareness concerning “moving and changing”. This was also true for several of the other projects.

In the Greek validation activity for adult educators, self-evaluation with LEVEL5 was built into the process as one of the four steps participants went through. The other steps were among others writing and reflection on one's own biography. In this way, LEVEL5 contributed to enabling participants to clarify their awareness of own competences.

The project with German supermarket employees that were to deal with mentally handicapped persons was different from the other pilot projects in that LEVEL5 was used as a framework for quality assurance of the course. The cube was not used directly, but the measuring points of the competence dimensions entered into a questionnaire filled in by participants. This helped make clear to the trainers the necessity of differentiated teaching. For example, older employees were very experienced at meeting the handicapped customers but knew little about their handicaps, whereas the younger employees struggled more with being in contact with handicapped customers. Even though the effects of the use of LEVEL5 on learning activities has been very varied, LEVEL5 has made its mark on the activities by contributing towards creating language as part of the methodology when LEVEL5 was used as a tool for reflection or towards focusing and differentiating the content of the activity.

4.4 Assessment methods and participant response to the assessment

In the projects, self-evaluation played a role in some form or other. The three projects where the participants had a pedagogical background, self-evaluation was the primary

assessment method, namely the autodidact adult teachers in Greece, the counselor students in Lithuania, and the day care leaders in Denmark. In Greece, self-evaluation was part of a broader basis for validation. In Lithuania, it was combined with interviews with LEVEL5 experts, whereas the day care managers could involve peers in the assessment. For the Lithuanian students, the self-evaluation and the interview constituted a valuable self-awareness raising exercise in themselves. The Danish day care centre leaders said that the self-evaluation not only made them to be more conscious of their own competences; it could also make them contemplate how to tackle their job as leaders with respect to inclusion. Self-evaluation was also used with the Austrian hotel and restaurant workers at a workshop before and after the learning activity. Here, participants were very interested in using LEVEL5 and curious about the competence development.

In the remaining pilots, trainers and project workers played a key role in the assessment: in the project around the voluntary Club GREEN in Turkey, teachers and a research assistant observed participants, and on the basis of their observations, made an assessment. This assessment was then discussed with the student, and in some cases it was amended. Furthermore, students could reflect on their level at the beginning and the end of the activity. Since the students were told that they would receive a certificate, this motivated them to participate in similar projects.

The inmates participating in the sewing course and the French prison were observed by their teachers, received frequent feedback, and could discuss this with their teachers. In addition, they were interviewed on the basis of the assessment from LEVEL5. This form of specific feedback contributed towards a more nuanced communication concerning how to act and behave. The inmates adopted the feedback and several of them used LEVEL5 to share their families how they had progressed.

Especially in the Irish project, a broad selection of different forms of feedback and reflection was used. Participants had a learning log, there were group reflections, and video and sound recordings were used. Furthermore, there were interviews of the individual participant. The approach to marking was explained to participants and all seemed happy with it. There were fear about some marks being higher than others and the opportunity for everyone to know how well each learner performed. Participants strived to reach the goal for the final assessment, both individually and by helping each other in the group.

The women at the German nursing homes did not meet LEVEL5 during the palliative care course, but were interviewed with reflective questions three months after by their lecturer on stress coping. The women were open for the assessment and the reflection as they felt the topic is important for them personally as well as for their professional well-being.

Assessment was not visible to the employees in the German supermarkets, as the aim here was to secure quality assurance of the course rather than to evaluate participants. The questionnaire assessment showed that participants have improved, and the questions triggered response from the participants, who for instance questioned their own views on disability.

In the choice of assessment methods in the pilots, the different contexts for learning as well as participants' starting points and competences were very much taken into consideration. No matter which methods have been used, the results of the pilots clearly show that participants are affected by the assessment. When participants are assessed by others, they are very much focused on this evaluation, and both went being validated by others and by themselves, this spurs reflection. This is probably also true of the number of other assessment tools; but special to the pilot projects at hand is that LEVEL5 has been used actively to support learning processes and that the detailed and fine grained assessment has been effective in helping learners to be aware of, reflect on, and have proof of competences otherwise only assessable with difficulty.

4.5 Usability

The pilots also involved the question of usability of the approach. Several projects state that trainers cannot use LEVEL5 without having been introduced to it. They emphasize that the introductory course is important or they state that they have involved project workers who already knew how to use LEVEL5. Participants who have used LEVEL5 directly have had no difficulty using it. However, it needs to be noted that in projects where participants' academic skills were not high, participants have not worked directly with LEVEL5.

Piloting showed that an effective use of LEVEL5 is very much dependent on project team members' assistance to evaluators and/or potential training the evaluators on the use of LEVEL5. In future use, it is suggested that initial training is provided to the evaluators so that they can carry out data collection through various methods and ana-

lyze the data they collect based on the descriptions of the levels for the respective competencies.

4.7 Further impact

Finally, individual partners have seen the effects that reach above and beyond participants' expected learning. The use of LEVEL5 initiated reflections among the teachers, not only on SPOC but also on content, methods and differentiation. Furthermore this kind of assessment of SPOC can show decision-makers that participants actually do develop their SPOC through the learning activities.

In some of the pilots the partners developed additional tools to extend the use of LEVEL5, for example questionnaires and interview guides. These tools can be helpful in other settings, too.

The use of LEVEL5 can also be useful in dissemination of various learning activities critical to learners' development to external individuals and bodies such as parents, employers, employment agencies, etc. These activities usually are carried out without sufficient recognition whereas they could be an important part of individual development; therefore the potential impact of the assessment of these competencies could be greater than what has been observed during the piloting stage. The piloting showed that in some countries project activities even resulted in coverage by the local and national media (Ireland), and this drew attention to the need for assessing individual, social and organisational competencies.

5. Annex

Annex 1: Quantitative experience report form

Part 1

Introduction		Authors properties				
		mainly	partly	not		
	education	5	1			
	social services					
	research	1	3			
	consulting		4			
	VILMA experiences applying LEVEL5					
	Background (University, practical project)	mainly	partly	not		
	University	4				
	(Informal) Training Institute	4				
	NGO	2				
	Grassroot-Project	0				
		very much	much	neutral	less	not at all
Question 1	Usefulness, helpfulness	++	+	0	-	--
	The LEVEL5 approach is relevant in the project context	5	3	2		
	LEVEL5 helps the project personnel to justify their work	5	3	1	1	
	LEVEL5 helps the project personnel to improve their work processes	4	3	3		
	LEVEL5 helps the project personnel to develop their competences	4	5	1		
	LEVEL5 helps project personnel in their daily routine	2	3	3	2	
	The software will support documentation/evidencing in learning projects	6	3	1		
Question 2	practicability	++	+	0	-	--
	LEVEL5 is understandable	5	3	2		
	LEVEL5 requires external consultancy	1	5	2	2	
	It works faster when people have some routine	8	1	1		
	Help tools are required (references, handbooks)	4	3	2	1	
Question 3	effort	++	+	0	-	--
	LEVEL5 affords a lot of effort	2	5	3		
	LEVEL5 has a good input-output ratio	2	5	3		
	hours	1-2	3-4	4-8	8-16	16-24
	Required time for the selection of the relevant topics	7	3	0		
	Required time for refining the topics	6	2	1	1	
	Required time for completing one 3D-system for 1 topic/competence	3	5	1	1	
	Required time for assessments	4	1	4		1
	Required time for inserting data of 1 person per competence (3D)	9	1	0		
Question 4	Transferability	++	+	0	-	--
	LEVEL5 can be applied in other projects in my field of activity	7	2	1		
	LEVEL5 can be applied in other projects in my region/country	5	3	2		
	I already transferred it to other learning projects	5	3	2		
	LEVEL5 has a perspective in social and educational projects	5	4	1		
Question 5	Pre-knowledge and skills of staff	++	+	0	-	--
	LEVEL5 requires pedagogic knowledge and skills	3	3	4		
	LEVEL5 requires knowledge about competence development	4	4	2		
	LEVEL5 requires knowledge about the 3 learning dimensions (cube)	3	5	2		
	LEVEL 5 requires assessment skills	6	3	1		

Annex 2: partners pilot and experience reports

Aontas – Ireland	79
Schweizerischer Verband für Weiterbildung (SVEB) – Switzerland	89
Die Berater - Austria	95
INSUP Formation – France	102
Aristotele University Thessaloniki (AuTh) – Greece	109
Bupnet 1 – Germany	118
Bupnet 2 – Germany	126
BLINC - Italy	132
Vytautas Magnus University VMU – Lithuania	140
VIA University College – Denmark	145
Middle East Technical University (METU) – Turkey	152

Aontas – Ireland

project name:

Southill Men's Shed (LCEN-Limerick Community Education group)

project description:

South Hill Men's Shed is a men's group offering a number of learning activities: carpentry, cookery, the "skills challenge" (personal development). As community education is an inclusive practice, learners have been involved in the learning process by discussing with them the course content and arrangements. Learners have been evaluated before and after "the skills challenge" course. Furthermore, a learner has been involved in the steering group and his input was fundamental in adapting the competences framework: the framework language was too complex and the tutor adapted it.

The organisations involved in the project are:

LCEN Limerick Community Education Network is a city-wide network of community, voluntary and statutory groups involved in the organisation and delivery of community education in Limerick. The role of the Network is to provide a representative voice which will be effective in promoting and influencing developments in Community Education. Southill Family resource centre is a member of the network. Southill Family Resource Centre hosts the Men's Shed activity. The aim of the Family Resource Centre (FRC) is to combat disadvantage and improve the functioning of the family unit. The programme emphasises involving local communities in tackling the problems they face, and creating successful partnerships between voluntary and statutory agencies at community level. FRCs involves people from marginalised groups and areas of disadvantage at all levels, including on their Voluntary Management Committees.

Key services provided by FRCs include:

The provision of family support, information and advice at local level.

Practical assistance to community groups (such as training, information, advice and use of shared facilities).

Education courses and training opportunities.

Childcare facilities for those attending courses provided by the programme.

After-school clubs.

A Men's Shed is any community-based, non-commercial organisation which is open to all men where the primary activity is the provision of a safe, friendly and inclusive environment where the men are able to gather and/or work on meaningful projects at their own pace, in their own time and in the company of other men and where the primary objective is to advance the health and well-being of the participating men. Men's Sheds may look like a shed in your back yard yet they innovatively share some characteristics of both community education and health promotion projects. National website: <http://menssheds.ie>

Start date 28th March 2013

Start date

Content localisation (country):

Ireland

Who are the participants of the programme/project?

The target group - Southill Men's Shed- is a men's group whose members are adult learners (from 23 to 68 years of age) from a disadvantaged background: long term unemployed, lone parents, members of the Travellers community, migrants and refugees. Some statistics from the area:

47% of family units (where at least one child is aged under 15 years) in the Southill area are lone parent households.

41% of the population in the Southill area (over the age of 15) have left education with a primary education only or with no formal education; while 6% have a third level education.

The unemployment rate for the Southill area is 50%. For males, it is 56%, while for females, it is 42%.

7% of the population in the Southill area are in the Professional Social Class grouping (i.e. professional, managerial and technical workers), while 23% are in the Unskilled/Semi-skilled Social Class group.

25% of the population in the Southill area have a disability.

The 2011 HP Relative Deprivation Index score and classification for the 2 EDs in the Southill area are: Galvone B: -26.6, very disadvantaged; and Rathbane: -20.6, very disadvantaged; making the 2 EDs the 2nd and 10th most disadvantaged EDs in the country respectively.

Do you know your learners? Are there any special needs, preferences etc.? Descriptions of participants' profiles? (please refer to special characteristics/needs)

There are 10 learners taking part in the pilot project. They are all long term unemployed
There are people with physical disabilities, sight and mental health issues.

Why do the learners participate in your course/learning offer? What is their motivation to participate?

Take up a new challenge; they are taking part in the project because the group is supporting them; they want to build up their skills and increase their chances of finding employment.

Where does your project/programme take place (school, neighbourhood, club, home etc.)

Southhill Family Resource Centre, Southhill, Limerick, Ireland



Which resources do you need (e.g. equipment), what is available?

Room, venue, flipchart, tape recorder, video camera (overhead projector already available)

Tutor

Who initiated the project/activity? Is it supported externally?

Jim Prior, manager of the Family Resource Centre in Southill, initiated the Men's Shed group

to support local men in collaboration with the VEC (Vocational Education Committee) now the Limerick Education and Training Board(ETB) and the Limerick Community Education Network.

Aims/Goals

What are the aims of the project/learning activity from your institution's point of view?

The aim of the learning activity is to upskill long term unemployed men:

- Provide further education opportunities
- Improve their self-esteem
- Increase their chance of getting into the labour market
- Provide/improve learners social skills

The aim of the learning activity is also exploring new ways of working with the learners and keeping them interested in the course.

Are there other aims and expectations related to your project/activities from external bodies or persons (donors, funding authorities?). Is there a discrepancy between your goals and the goals of the external?

There are no discrepancies between internal and external goals: once the learners have improved their skills they can enroll in courses with the ETB (local statutory provider of further education and funding body).

To what extent are the principal goals, objectives and guidelines of the project (programme) understood by the participants?

Participants understood that the project would lead to the improvement of their social and personal skills, skills that they will use in the future to gain employment. The competences framework has been adapted to meet the literacy needs of the group. Learners are interested in the validation provided and they are looking forward to receiving a LEVEL5 certificate.

What is your motivation to evaluate your project? Why do you evaluate your project?

The evaluation of the project is a learning process; it provided the opportunity to explore ways of showcasing the value, and measuring, community education practice. The VITA project allows the participating organisation to highlight progress made by learners and therefore it could be a powerful tool to make a case in front of funders/donors.

Project/Programme/learning activity Implementation:

What services/components are offered? Which activities are carried out?

Men's Shed offer a number of learning activities: carpentry, cookery, the "skills challenge" (personal development).

As community education is an inclusive practice, learners have been involved in the learning process by discussing with them the course content and arrangements.

Furthermore a learner has been involved in the steering group and his input was fundamental in adapting the framework: the framework language was too complex and the tutor adapted it.

Each session has been documented with notes, videos and photos. The assessment took place at the beginning, middle and end of the course (only the beginning and end were used for LEVEL5).

The assessment consists of a conversation with each of the learners (recorded on flip chart paper and also the final session recorded as a sound recording). N.B. since some of the learners have a low level of literacy it would have been difficult to carry out a written assessment.

Who are the trainers/teachers/guides/helpers? What roles and responsibilities do they have?

Tutor led the personal development course and helped the learners to reflect and implement the competences they were learning. Evaluator made sure that the activities corresponded to the agreed content and timeline.

Steering group Identified target group and assured stakeholders support.

Duration of the learning offer: How many hours/days do you plan for the learning activities over which period of time?

8 weeks, 3 hours per week

What kind of methodology do you want to use? (See e.g. informal learning patterns)

Community development practice, Bottom- up approach, critical thinking(self-reflection)

Development of competencies

Expected impact of the project/activity/training/programme, Aspired competences What is the expected impact of your services offered on participants?

Empowerment of long term unemployed people. Learners organized a networking event with a Tipperary Men's Shed group. They had to contact the group, agree a date and time for the event, plan the trip and meet the Tipperary learners. They also organized a table quiz activity to raise some funds for the Men's Shed. Both activities required planning, problem solving

and leadership competences.

Which particular competences do you assess in the project?

Leadership, problem solving, networking

Substantiated/contextualized reference system is enclosed

Yes.

How is the LEVEL5 integrated in the learning activity? Is it added to an already planned activity/taken in consideration during the planning? When and how is the LEVEL5 cube presented for the learners?

LEVEL5 was used as the basis to develop the personal development course called "Southill Men's Shed skill challenge". The 3 competences frameworks were used to plan the content of the development course. Overview of 8 weeks course attached.

Learners know their marks but the cube will be presented to them on the day they receive the certificate. The LEVEL5 certificates will be presented to learners at the VITA final meeting in October 2013.

Assessment method(s)

Each participant has a learning diary(or learning Journal)

Video and tape recording (some learners have low literacy levels)

Group reflection

Experiences

Number of learners using LEVEL5 in the test (state number presented for the cube, and number actually using it)

10 learners presented for the cube, 10 learners using it

Evaluation

1. Feasibility and usability

The evaluation process was a little complicated, but assuming the leader/tutor has good awareness of the participant in terms of starting levels of knowledge, practice and awareness, this system could be utilised. The evaluation forms should be explained from the beginning, as the initial assessments of levels for the learners should take place at the very beginning.

The learners definitely benefitted from the project in terms of its relevance. LEVEL5 was defi-

nately achievable for most of the learners. A hands-on approach was adopted, and it is advised that each centre adopting this programme looks at the optimum way of working with the respective groups, i.e. is it theory-based or more practise-based. This project revolved entirely around an event where it was easy to justify the need to develop the skills of leadership, problem-solving and networking.

The approach to marking was explained to participants at the end of the programme and all seemed happy with it. There was a fear about some marks being higher than others and the opportunity for everyone to know how well each learner performed. This was handled in the marking briefing session.

The learners when briefed on the marking scheme had no objections to the label of “LEVEL5”. They would all be somewhat familiar with QQI (Quality Qualification Ireland-Irish awarding body) and QQI uses similar language for awards.

The local conditions were taken into account when planning the programme, to ensure the group was fully consulted in the activities which they would be assessed on, and that the skills they were developing had real-life application.

“Based on the final week feedback I as tutor am confident that the group as individuals have both identified opportunities to continue putting these skills to use, in a voluntary capacity, and for the most part have the drive to pursue the opportunities for putting these skills to use.”

If this programme was to be run again, it might be useful to re-visit some of the template descriptors for evaluation. Given the group in question, some of the fields weren’t as relevant and it was a stretch to match the outcomes to the parameters of the fields.

2. Efforts and acceptance

Initial assessments took a few weeks to gauge the practical, theoretical and experiential knowledge of the areas prior to learning. The final assessment was easy given the variance in overall effort and work between the learners.

There was one learner who stated on the final week he could not do the work, but this was due to a visual impairment, and he was accommodated to ensure he could submit work for the project. Aside from this, all learners completed their work and there were regular check-ins to ensure they had enough time and support to complete their work.

As stated above, the programme was designed to ensure the activities were relevant to the

groups' day to day activities, and was therefore meaningful to them.

In summary, the development in learning was easy to measure amongst the group and with the exception of the last-minute insight into one of the learner's problems giving in the work, the process was relatively smooth. In hindsight I am unsure how this could be remedied in future, as every week there was an opportunity for learners to ask questions and there were several opportunities to give feedback which weren't availed of by the learner in question.

3. Preconditions/Pre-knowledge of personnel

The main precondition is to specify the importance of an initial evaluation of learner's abilities, as this will speed up the evaluation process at the end of the course.

The experts should have some overview of the target group if they are external to the organisation that is recruiting the learners, as this may help drafting the outline programme.

Learners should know as adults they are responsible for their own learning, and that if there are challenges meeting the requirements of the programme it is their responsibility to talk to the coordinator/tutor about how to remedy this situation.

I applied the "South Hill Men's Shed skills challenge" programme with a particular focus on the current levels of learning of the group, the need for a practical course with relevant outcomes to the day to day experience of the learners. With the exception of the evaluation, the experience of delivering it was quite positive.

4. Transferability and perspectives

All assessment was done using the LEVEL5 approach. The tutor doesn't plan on using it in other learning activities, as it was quite time-consuming to utilise (90 marking sheets in total as opposed to one sheet per learner).

There has been some discussion of progressing with the learners using some of the other competencies to assess, and if this is done, then the LEVEL5 framework will be used.

As mentioned above the principal limitation is the lengthy evaluation process. A tick-box approach didn't abbreviate matters as each of the 9 points marked for each learner had to be justified.

5. Effects

Case Study: Participant D

Participant D participated in the programme and from the outset presented with the greatest level of anxiety about the programme. He had negative experiences of formal learning and was uncomfortable with doing “homework”. The nature of the project was that the main activity was a group activity, and part of the assessment was based on the level of proactivity the learners displayed towards taking on additional responsibilities. Participant D although worried about his abilities to perform was soon identifiable as one of the most proactive in the group. He strove to do all that was necessary to accomplish the work required for assessment. “as a group I think we did very well” was one of Participant D’s statements about the programme, and I think this group context allowed him to grow and develop within a safe environment. His progression was the most marked out of the entire group. His biggest learning was around his confidence to try and succeed at new things.

Case Study: Participant I

Participant I came into the programme at the most advanced level out of the group. He had completed some 3rd level study around leadership, and quickly emerged as a natural leader in the group. “I enjoyed my experience as a leader” was one of Participant I’s quotes and he brought external life experience of motivating groups into the event and was key in making sure the group persisted on the evening despite some setbacks. He acknowledged that he knew quite a bit about the subject areas prior to starting, and he was very generous with sharing his knowledge without dominating the class. His overall progression was therefore low, given his already high starting marks. His biggest benefit from the learning was the practical experience of being the overall group leader.

Case Study: Tutor

This programme was unlike anything I had run before. The group dynamic was by far the biggest asset to the success of this project. The group were a tightly-bonded team, who supported each other throughout the weeks. The practical dimension of the course was commented on by the learners who preferred it to “sitting down all day looking at notes”. The course worked in this community context, as the language was geared towards the learners, and experiences and examples were elicited from the group, rather than brought in from the outside. The evaluation process was very lengthy but it gave clear indications of the levels of progression of the individuals.

Future perspectives and other reflections

The difference between the LEVEL5 Method and the FETAC one (Irish system of qualifications) is that LEVEL5 allows for measuring learners effective progress across the competence while FETAC requires the learner to be at the same level on all dimensions and doesn't track progress if this isn't the case. There are advantages and disadvantages in both methodologies and the provider should choose the most suitable method for the group/activity.

The competences inventory is a useful tool because it gives a detailed description of the levels for each competence. The competence level breakdown was used to develop the "South Hill Men's Shed Skills Challenge" personal development course. It could be used by the same group to develop other courses to develop other competences and other groups could use it too.

Schweizerischer Verband für Weiterbildung (SVEB) - Switzerland

project name:

Schweizer Lernfestival 2013

project description:

Valorisation of Competences: Planning and Organizing as a Coordinator in the Swiss Lernfestival.

Of the project

Of the trainings:

Lernfestival Switzerland

Certified Coordinators

Content localisation (country):

Switzerland

Who are the participants of the programme/project?

Coordinators who are willing to organize a Lernfestival in their town, region or canton. They will celebrate Lifelong Learning with 24 hours, the 3rd week in September.

Descriptions of participants' profiles? (please refer to special characteristics/needs)

Persons, who are willing to sacrifice their time (as a volunteer), to motivate others for Lifelong Learning. Their profession could be a teacher, involved in the health sector, a career counselor or just convinced, that learning keeps everybody young and being active is crucial to health-issues and social inclusion. Learning is also an added value to life and work.

Why do the learners participate in your course/learning offer?

For organizing a Lernfestival and dedicating a lot of time (and money) does not show on the acquired competences on a curriculum. Until now, there is no valorisation and future employers have no clue, that beyond the "normal" skills, they learned they are skilled organizers and have learned a lot about communication, project management and so on. With this workshop and of course, the certificate, they can show their new competences also to new employers and are also in a way compensated for their volunteer work. A certificate gives also a legitimate overview to policy makers, who should be involved in the Lernfestival or also to future sponsors. It's an added value and it's also a motivation to work as a coordinator and so to acquire new skills.

Where does your project/programme take place (school, neighborhood, club, home etc.)

First, there was a lecture, then we had three workshops. After that, it was in the own responsibility to take over the coordination and work in "the field". Each coordinator can organize the

own Festival (24 hours or less). A must is, to take over the Slogan “Learning with head, heart, hand and feet”. All the events are offered by other experts and take place in house or out in the nature. And all people are invited to be part of it. That means, learning takes place directly at the doorsteps and is free of charge.

Who initiated the project/activity?

SVEB is involved since 1996 in the Lernfestival. The VITA Project makes competences visible and is therefore an ideal opportunity to give recognition to our coordinators, to value their huge work, and to motivate new persons to take over. Therefore it was a must for the national coordinator (SVEB) to take over LEVEL5 and to honour the persons involved.

Aims/Goals

What are the aims of the project/learning activity from your institution's point of view?

This certificate is a testimony to others to prove that volunteer work is not lost, but it can be validated and added to the curriculum. This certificate should also help to make it more attractive to take over coordination in a town/city/region.

Project/Programme/learning activity. Which activities are carried out?

To organize a Lernfestival (24 hours – or less) event, that takes place on the 3rd week in September, starting Friday at 5 pm and ending Saturday at 5 pm. Each coordinator establish it's own program, that means will motivate institutions, associations, SMEs of all sectors (health, culture, art, handicraft, sports, education etc.) to be part of this event and compose a program, that attracts people leaving in this area. It should also involve policy makers and the community council. Lifelong Learning is for everybody.

On the other hand, they have to learn how to deal with the medias, who to find sponsors. So a lot of new skills can be inquired within this project.

And in addition to that, they are responsible for the program (folder) to fill in. This will be printed and then distributed in the area.

So organizing/managing, motivating, communicating and even looking for finances are skills which will be acquired and required to do a good job.

Who are the trainers/trainers/guides/helpers? What roles and responsibilities do they have?

Involved were the project manager of the VITA-Project. The role was teaching, motivating accompanying and counselling the persons who are involved. We also organized additional monitoring groups, and meetings on site to help when there were some difficulties. And of

course the telephone line was always open.

Duration of the learning offer: How many hours/days for the learning activities over which period of time?

The lecture was at the end of January 2013, including the first Workshop, the next day. The 2nd Workshop was in March and the 3rd was in April. The other meetings were scheduled on demand and over the phone. The event was on September 20 and 21 / 2013

What kind of methodology is used?

Presentations, discussions, self-reflections, teamwork and tadem-learning.

What is the expected impact of your services offered on participants?

To establish a network for Lernfestival Coordinators, to motivate the existing coordinators to step up with the further development of their event and also to go on with the coordination. It's also kind of thank you for their work and in addition a motivation to take over coordination.

Development of competencies

Which particular competence(s) do you assess in the project?

Organisation and Planning

Substantiated/contextualized reference system

The reference system is established according to the needs of a person pointing out the skills somebody needs to qualify as a future coordinator.

How is the LEVEL5 integrated in the learning activity? Is it added to an already planned activity/ taken in consideration during the planning? When and how are the LEVEL5 cube presented for the learners?

A provisional grid was explained and discussed with the "students". Then adapted to their needs, worked out as a tool for self-evaluation and then presented as a grid which was agreed by all.

Assessment method(s)

People filled out first the self-evaluation, then they got the grid and we sat down for the first assessment. After the Lernfestival was finished end of October, and all the internal evaluations were done, we sat down for the second evaluation and used the grid for an interview.

Experiences

Piloting strategy and methods

The methods were adequate. But, in Switzerland this kind of projects are not well known and it was not easy to find people who were willing to participate. People do not have time for long

questionnaires and are mostly not so fluent in English, that's why they had to be in German. Myself, I think, LEVEL5 is a really good and acceptable method for both parties involved. Because, at the end, it is an added value for both sides.

For the assessor it is a very good tool, to figure out, how a coordinator is already knowledgeable about the Lernfestival and what the skills are he or she already brings in. So the assessor knows exactly, what this person has to be taught or what kind of special help/counselling is needed. On the other side, the coordinator, who is volunteering get's a certificate and in addition an added value including new skills out of being part in the Swiss Lernfestival.

1. Feasibility and usability

Reflections on the use of LEVEL5

LEVEL5 is really a clever tool and that you can SEE your progress at the end, that the unique selling point of it. It is visible, that you did make some progress and it is also written. The cube is easy to read and understand. And it helps a (future) employer to see the progress within the timeframe the assessment was done.

2. Efforts and acceptance

In Switzerland it is a field not yet really explored and was very welcome to make visible the acquired skills. It could also be a tool for the visitors/participants of the Lernfestival. As we have also the obligation of the Ministry to reach out to low qualified persons, which is not an easy task. But, if we can show, that even a visit (quick assessment at the beginning, and a new acquired competence (quick assessment at the end) could make a difference, that can be shown (proofed) would be a very welcome outcome. That's why LEVEL5 has a great potential if it's rightly used.

3. Preconditions/Pre-knowledge of personnel

There is now training, the start is easy and without threshold. That's exactly what is needed for somebody who rejects learning. There is no stress before. Only somebody is needed who can explain LEVEL5 in a competent and understandable way.

In addition, LEVEL5 is easy adaptable to all expectations and can take care of the person which will be assessed.

4. Transferability and perspectives

LEVEL5 can be easily adapted to the need and is not fixated on a special competence. The grid can easily be adapted and will also work for other competences. There is only the need of a person, who is willing to build up a new grid and knows the field or the competences the

assessed person has to be in charge. LEVEL5 helps also to overcome fear and to feel more secure, because within the assessment you talk to the assessor (supervisor). I think, LEVEL5 has a great potential to be a really great added value for the labour market and to help people with no certificate to show what they can. In addition, LEVEL5 will help the low qualified persons to get some self-esteem and also to make them proud, as they can show that the acquired new competences.

5. Effects

It's a really very good tool also for the labour market. The result is shown at one glance.

6. Good Practice example – lessons to learn or something in between

Tell a story about the use of LEVEL5 in your testing context, use a narrative form, include the perspective of a learner, a teacher and/or and another relevant stakeholder. Quote some of her, his or their (reflective) statements on the use and effects of using LEVEL5.

When I started to ask around, if somebody is interested in an assessment to show the progress in planning and organizing the Lernfestival, most persons did not understand and were quite reluctant to be part in this project. They told me, they have no time to go back to "school" and they would already know how to coordinate and how to organize. The reason for those answers was also, that they are mostly owners of a business and if they are away, there is no income. So I did pay them a visit and explained what the purpose of LEVEL5 and how it works, showed some examples from another project and as they realized, that they would get a real outcome, something also other people could understand and value, they agreed to be part of this pilot group.

In addition LEVEL5 does work with the same words (dimensions) our Lernfestival is made off: "Learning with Head, Heart and Hands". So the transfer was quite easy made and the right questions could be asked and were understood. The threshold was overcome and I hope that LEVEL5 will also be taken over by the coordinators. Because, it could also be for them a new tool to attract the providers, that they get some certification for being part in this event.

In addition, LEVEL5 is a very good instrument to prove competences, which were not made visible before. It helps also to overcome the fear to fail, as there is no failure, if the right questions are asked. LEVEL5 can be an empowering force in helping to find self-esteem and to be more aware of what a person is capable to do. The only thing to take in consideration: the assessor has to be true and aware of the assessed person, has to take him-self back and just be the guide who gives some pegs or guidelines to ease the way to go.

Future perspectives and other reflections

This year (2014) there will be the next Lernfestival. In addition we are celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Law of Vocational Training. We will organize a special Exhibition for further education and training. And I would like to work during these days also with LEVEL5 as an exceptional assessment tool.

Die Berater - Austria

project name:

SÖB TOP-Lokal

project description:

The learning activity was initiated by the Austrian Labour Market Service in collaboration with the SÖB Top-Lokal. The main objective of the SÖB Top-Lokal is to support long-term unemployed persons in Austria and to promise them a better future after visiting training on-the-job. This means, after visiting training, participants are trained to be able to find jobs and to change their old patterns according to new attitudes, knowledge and skills. The learning activity "learning by doing" lasts for 6 months for each participant. They were 7 persons included in the VITA project and received additional training on "customer orientation" and workshop including two self-assessments.

Start date February 2013

End date September 2013

Content localisation (country):

The Austrian Labour Market Service in collaboration with the SÖB Top-Lokal which is located in the heart of Vienna.

Who are the participants of the programme/project?

The target groups are long-term unemployed persons who partly already worked in a hotel and restaurant industry or in the catering industry before. The age ranges from 23-40 males and females. They are trained systematically so that they can apply knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary in the hotel, restaurant and catering industry in a short period of time. The approach is learning on-the-job or learning by doing.

Descriptions of participants' profiles? (please refer to special characteristics/needs)

Participants have different professions, sometimes many in one person, but mostly without a formal education in the hotel and restaurant industry, semi-skilled workers: sales-adviser, call-shop operator, hairdresser, sales-person, bar-keeper, cocktail-barmen, and some of them for many reasons landed jobless.

Why do the learners participate in your course/learning offer?

The learners lack very much of the ability to convince employers of their abilities and competencies. All of them are long-term unemployed and need to know how to communicate with

“customers” (customer orientation) to be able to land a new job in the service industry.

Where does your project/programme take place (school, neighbourhood, club, home etc.)

The project and learning activities took place in a SÖP Top-Lokal restaurant. Activities were carried out such as: ordering food and drinks by delivery companies, preparing meals in the kitchen and serving the food to the customers by supervision of professional cooks and front-of-house staff. Two self-assessments and a workshop have been organised with regards to customer-orientation.

Who initiated the project/activity?

The learning activity was initiated by the Austrian employment agency in cooperation with SÖB Top-Lokal.

Aims/Goals

What are the aims of the project/learning activity from your institution's point of view?

- Providing innovative solutions to the Public Employment Service Austria (AMS) for preparing long-term unemployed people for employment.
- Creating new employment opportunities for long-term unemployed people in the hotel, restaurant and catering industry by providing transit employment for them.
- Corporate Social Responsibility with better future prospects for long-term unemployed persons, giving them an opportunity to prove themselves in a friendly and customer-oriented environment, giving them strengths and hopes for finding new jobs, taking responsibility for their lives and so creating for them a better future.

Project/Programme/learning activity. Which activities are carried out?

The learning activity within the scope of the VITA project took place during three months with self-assessment, interviews, discussions, workshops, training, new insights, setting priorities, personal development and change in attitudes. The activities focused on assessments before and after a learning situation where awareness raising activities took place that make learners to provoke some aha-effects. This means learners were aware what is important and how to gain necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to cope better with customers in the future. As a metaphor “customer” means everybody they are dealing with in their environment, however in this specific learning project priorities are set on their customers in a restaurant. The knowledge gained can be applied as mentioned before in every single life situation!

Who are the trainers/teachers/guides/helpers? What roles and responsibilities do they have?

The main trainer is self-employed and has more than 20 years' experience with customers in various business fields. On the other hand training is provided on the job with experienced

restaurant managers who provide feedback for improvement on a daily basis.

Duration of the learning offer: How many hours/days for the learning activities over which period of time?

6 months Monday to Friday a 8 hours training-on-the job plus two self-assessments and semi-structured interviews and 1 day workshop regarding customer orientation.

What kind of methodology is used?

Action learning and useful additional methods including feedback, observation and reflection.

What is the expected impact of your services offered on participants?

The impact includes better understanding of customers and proper understanding of customer-orientation. This competence was chosen for many reasons, because all people today can be customers, not only in the restaurant but rather all people they deal with somehow. The impact should be a big change in attitude, new insights, new skills and new knowledge.

The expected impact of the learning activity together with other activities in the implementation programme is to be able to convince employer to find a new job and be customer-oriented in the new job.

Development of competencies

Which particular competence(s) do you assess in the project?

Customer Orientation

Substantiated/contextualized reference system is ENCLOSED

German version of Assessment Grids is available.

How is the LEVEL5 integrated in the learning activity? Is it added to an already planned activity/ taken in consideration during the planning? When and how are the LEVEL5 cube presented for the learners?

Trainers formulated goals and indicators in LEVEL5 for 'Customer Orientation', and used them as basis for their pedagogical planning of their part of the learning activity.

They introduced LEVEL5 for 'Customer Orientation' during the second session, and the participants assessed themselves in a setting in which they could talk with peers in their team of leaders. In the workshop and in the final assessment the 7 people from SÖB Top Restaurant assessed themselves again.

Assessment method(s)

Self-assessment (two self-assessments including semi-structured interviews and one day

workshop for practical observation and reflection).

Experiences

The system LEVEL5 was used in the development of competencies related to customer orientation. The piloting focused on self-assessment before and after a learning situation as envisaged in LEVEL5. The learning situation was incorporated in LEVEL5, the reference system was developed for customer orientation and people who were trained could evaluate themselves in the self-assessment before and after a learning situation. The reference system is available in German.

LEVEL5 system was explained to participants, what is it and how it can be used. All participants were interested in using LEVEL5 and curious about their competence development that could be measured with LEVEL5. After self-assessments and the workshop they could reflect on the learning situation.

Piloting activities:

- 1) Use of LEVEL5 in the development of competencies with regards to customer orientation
 - The trainer formulated goals and indicators for 'Customer Orientation' in LEVEL5,
 - The trainer organised a one day workshop dedicated to customer orientation,
 - Another experienced reviewed the customer orientation competences together with the main trainer,
 - The participants assessed themselves individually and had afterwards interviews with trainers and an additional feedback,
 - Two months later, at the end of the course, after action-learning and another session of teaching the participants assessed themselves again in the same setting.
- 2) Reflections on the use of LEVEL5:
 - Semi-structured interview with the trainers,
 - Role plays and changing views with a second trainer,
 - The participants gave also their feedback about assessments and the workshop. Some of them stated, that they enjoyed the training and could make big progress in their competence development and become aware of their behavior and learning steps.

1. Feasibility and usability

The perspective of the trainer:

Trainers were impressed by the LEVEL5 system. They discussed during the workshop that various competences can be measured by participants before and after a learning situation. Participants are more aware of their competences and will be also in the future. It is a think-

ing process and self-reflection for all participants. Three dimensions affective, active and cognitive are three important elements that were explained how they work together.

The affective dimension is the least verbalized and explicated competence dimension.

In the cognitive dimension, they recognize basic learning models, and reflect on how it is related to situated learning. It is interesting that participants know quite a lot about customer orientation, however, when it comes to finding new jobs, they are still struggling and are not able to prove to the new employer their competences with their attitude, knowledge and skills. This was the case in the past, they truly hope to be more self-confident in the future and aware of the competences they possess but they weren't aware of them before the training.

Trainers report that they found the training exciting and challenging. It was quite a lot of individual work with the participants since all of them have various backgrounds and competences.

LEVEL5 is a valuable tool in the VET system and development. It is essential to consider the before and after situation and to document it. The documentation process is challenging but very clear, transparent and useful. Social and personal competences are seen by employers as essential and it is very important to be aware of that. They are a part of personality and LEVEL5 contributes to personal development, awareness of the competences and to more success for people and for companies.

The participants' perspective:

During the workshop, LEVEL5 was introduced to the participants. It was explained how important it is to be aware of competence development and LEVEL5 is a system that can trace and measure competence development before and after a learning situation. When they had evaluated themselves, they were asked to write down the reflections elicited by working with the schemas. The first outcome was that LEVEL5 is a useful tool for personal development. Participants needed some assistance with self-assessments they wanted rather to explain things. They were not aware of their level of knowledge at the beginning. They needed to do some self-reflection, additional talks and explanations in order to be able to fill in self-assessments. They were very interested in how competences.

They were curious of their learning curve, how far they could get from the start to the end of the training using LEVEL5 system. The general attitude to the forms was positive. Even

though some participants are not used to fill in forms, to reflect on themselves etc. but they realised that they could analyse themselves and be aware of their skills and use the methodology also in the future, in particular when they are looking for a new job.

2. Efforts and acceptance

The form and indicators of customer-orientation was prepared and the participants spent a few minutes reading them while they are considered indicators and evaluated themselves. To do the self-evaluation was necessary to in the class in needed some practice. Observations and reflections with participants show that that the procedure, self-evaluation, LEVEL5 and reflection were very useful for them.

3. Preconditions/Pre-knowledge of personnel

The trainer who was mainly responsible for the course has over 20 years of experience in various teaching environments.

4. Transferability and perspectives

Since today professional skills are not sufficient it will be more demand for such tools like LEVEL5 in HR departments, companies and training companies.

5. Effects

The immediate effect of using LEVEL5 was explained by the trainers who formulated the goals and indicators for 'customer orientation'. Reflections of the participants show that they understand the meaning of customer orientation in a broader way. In the first interview they focused very abstract on the term customer orientation. The awareness of their competences boosted and participants became more self-confident and were thinking which competences they have unconsciously developed. The impact will be visible even more in the future. The first step to self-awareness has been done and further steps will be necessary to improve and recognize other competences on the same basis.

Good Practice example – lessons to learn or something in between

Tell a story about the use of LEVEL5 in your testing context, use a narrative form, include the perspective of a learner, a teacher and/or and another relevant stakeholder. Quote some of her, his or their (reflective) statements on the use and effects of using LEVEL5.

LEVEL5 can be seen as an effective tool for self-evaluation and self-reflection. Many people are challenged at the beginning and need more assistance and explanations why it is necessary to reflect on themselves. The major factor is always connected with the correct analysis of the people who they're, what they can, what they cannot, who can help them and how etc.

Taking the seven participants into account and their failure to find a new job is because of the situation that they were not aware of their attitudes, knowledge and skills before and were not able to convince their potential employers for jobs. It would be very interesting to trace the further steps of the participants, to see the changes occurred in their lives, to see how they implement the new gained skills into their future life and work.

Future perspectives and other reflections

The first step is always the hardest and we think that a strong ground has been made for a big change in participant's attitudes, knowledge and skills. The gained tools, methodologies, reflections can be used as an indicator for improvement in every area of their life.

INSUP Formation – France

project name:

Sewing qualification in prison

project description:

The training project was commissioned by the prison authorities and co financed by the Aquitaine Region and the European Social Fund. It's an innovative project in French prison: the vocational and education training and the education department (school) are working hand in hand to carry out this action: one trainer (technological aspects) and three teachers (general subjects) plus two coordinators. The trainees/detainees have the possibility of obtaining after a ten months learning, a diploma and probably a better situation as prisoners.

Content localisation (country):

Penitentiary center of Bordeaux-Gradignan in South West of France

Who are the participants of the programme/project?

Group of eight detainees

Descriptions of participants' profiles? (please refer to special characteristics/needs)

These trainees/detainees are adult men aged between 25 and 57. They have been incarcerated under correctional or criminal procedure for offences - ranging from individual or group violence to drugs consumption and/or trafficking, theft, fraud and rape - or crime.

Their initial level of qualification is mainly French level VI (no qualifications, early exit from the education system, non acquisition of basic knowledge...).

Why do the learners participate in your course/learning offer?

These trainees/learners are volunteers to participate to our learning course. Actually, this type of population is perfectly aware that kind of occupation can shorten their stay in prison. The challenge for our team is to make the training interesting in content and attractive in its objectives, beyond the most obvious one of permitting the earliest possible release from prison.

Where does your project/programme take place (school, neighbourhood, club, home etc.)

The INSUP training centre was provided with a room in the heart of the workshops within the prison walls. Here, about fifty inmates execute work for outside companies. Eight project participants spend time alongside these workers, sometimes joining them in their production of tramway seat covers, professional overalls, immersion heater covers, etc. which is a similar

situation to a work placement in a professional environment.

Who initiated the project/activity?

This action is sponsored by the Prison Administration in liaison with the Aquitaine Regional Council which cofounds the project – an innovative one for the French prison sector - to the same degree as the European Social Fund. Our training center has developed the project in its construction.

Aims/Goals

What are the aims of the project/learning activity from your institution's point of view?

The aims of the project are:

- To obtain an Education Department qualification.
- For certain types of prisoner, to continue incarceration in another type of prison where they will be given work involving sewing.
- For other types of prisoner, to have access to work experience placements when they are released, or in the case of day release, probation, parole, etc.

Project/Programme/learning activity. Which activities are carried out?

Education department: French, Maths, Geography, History and Physics

Vocational and Education training: technological aspects “sewing”

Who are the trainers/teachers/guides/helpers? What roles and responsibilities do they have?

Three teachers from Education Department for general aspects and a trainer for the sewing qualification. They should base their teaching on referenced programs and ensure that students/trainees are ready for the theoretical and practical exam.

Duration of the learning offer: how many hours/days for the learning activities over which period of time?

Miscellaneous times all along the ten months training course

What kind of methodology is used?

Action learning

What is the expected impact of your services offered on participants?

- Knowledge and skills
 - - Development of basic knowledge (French, maths)
 - - Mastery of professional techniques in the industrial sewing sector

- Affective state
 - - Acceptance of others with different imprisonment problems
 - - Appropriation of social codes facilitating integration
 - - Acquisition of general behaviour adapted to the work environment
- Activity level
 - - Autonomy with the main working tool : the sewing machine
 - - Involvement in the implementation of teamwork: mutual technical help

Development of competencies

Which particular competence(s) do you assess in the project?

Leadership and tolerance

Substantiated/contextualized reference system is ENCLOSED

Yes

How is the LEVEL5 integrated in the learning activity? Is it added to an already planned activity/ taken in consideration during the planning? When and how are the LEVEL5 cube presented for the learners?

The LEVEL5 was integrated at the very beginning of January 2013, i.e. four months after the launch of the training course. It was a deliberate choice of the coordination unit: the turnover within this target group of detainees was very important to start with and the students/trainees weren't available for such an additional activity as the LEVEL5.

The LEVEL5 was presented by INSUP and integrated in the learning activity as a way of assessing the informal learning outcomes of the detainees who take part in the training course. We had to explain the "informal learning" and our methodology. We did insist on one point: the LEVEL5 as a tool of assessing their progress or not. The two topics were finally chosen by both of teams (Education department and vocational training) and the coordinator was very close to a clash when he announced and explained one of the topics: tolerance. There was moreover an expectation of trainees about the assessment: if there is no progress will I get my diploma?

At last a "paper presentation" of certificates was distributed to the detainees.

Assessment method(s)

- Observation and regular feedback within the team (notetaking and minutes)
- Discussions with Education Department teachers

- Individual interviews with participants based on the assessment grids

Experiences

Piloting strategy and methods

The aim of the piloting was to evaluate LEVEL5 in the development of competencies related to VET sector: 1) use of LEVEL 2) check the impact of the assessment with this type of trainees

LEVEL5 was integrated in the learning activity through following activities:

- Trainees' competencies (leadership and tolerance) to be assessed as part of the learning activity were determined in consultation with the teachers and the trainer.
- The competencies were contextualized in line with the project goals and activities.
- The trainer was asked to fill out the LEVEL5 assessment tools for each detainee (a total of 5 due to turnover).
- Assessment for each dimension in LEVEL5 was done for each trainee to summarize the development for each competency.

Results of piloting LEVEL5 within the context of a prison to a specific group –detainees-:

- Piloting has shown that LEVEL5 could be a useful approach to assess informal learning outcomes that are not measured through traditional assessment methods.
- The competencies selected for assessment (leadership and tolerance) were selected specifically insofar our training center did want that to create a debate within the group AND the stakeholders to make the mentalities evolve: VET sector must not be generally in consensus.
- The contextualization of the competencies appears to be important in relating the common descriptors to the ones that are relevant to the context of learning activity.
- Trainer did have some difficulty in using the LEVEL5 system in assessing trainees' competencies due to the context of regular turnover. She received help and advices of the VITA French team.
- Multiple methods of data collections were effective to do the assessment
- About the impact of the assessment to the detainees, we can state that the implementation of LEVEL5 has allowed to launch the discussion even if it was usually rough and get people wonder about themselves and their vision of others. The evaluation of informal skills cannot just hide behind the access to a diploma and above gives an overall consideration of the individual. Elsewhere and finally, the detainees found

quite fair their assessment.

1. Feasibility and usability

Three teachers out of four were specialists of this public in charge of the training and of the prison sector. For the fourth contributor, she was the technical trainer in sewing for first time and in prison. She did appreciate to be involved about the LEVEL5 approach and not just to evaluate the technical progress of the detainees.

The team considers the LEVEL5 was very useful and relevant to determinate precisely the situation of each trainee: that is to say to formalise the informal learning. The LEVEL5 was very helpful to tell the Prison Authorities how the prisoners advanced on the training course on an individual point of view and within the group.

After the choice of the 2 competencies “Leadership” and “Tolerance”, the trainers understood the systematic approach. Because we decided to leave for a while on the side the approach to observe the group and not to interfere on the formal learning, the only difficulty was that the trainers could not hold the training and in the same time, apply the observation grid. That’s the reason why, we had one or two consultations per week to keep a link with the approach and our observations.

Especially on this training course, the dimensions –activity and affective-were easy to describe and to evaluate instead of the cognitive dimension. The context of the training course is an explanation to this point: the detainees haven’t got overall a natural behaviour. They have to prove something to the others detainees so the difficulty to detect evolution is high.

The 3D-stage system was a suitable approach to describe competence development of our trainees. This training course was a very concrete action and the objectives were very clear since the beginning as extra-possibilities for them: salary, qualification, shorten the stay in prison, work placement...So, the teamwork didn’t have to motivate them at all to act or to be in daily life in community. Moreover in prison, emotions are palpable. The observation on the 3D-stage system was facilitated.

2. Efforts and acceptance

The teachers and the trainer consider that the implementation of LEVEL5 was a very good way to share and to compare our point of view on detainees. Most of time, we had informal debates on these topics and lines of thought thereby structuring knowledge of persons.

The training session in prison gave the team necessary knowledge on their general work and

the LEVEL5 methodology added them fineness and consistency of judgement certainly more adequate in our global approach.

The team did have the feeling to learn about their way to observe trainees and the acuity of judgement on them. Our view on detainees had an influence on the good results of the training.

For our team it was the first experience with this methodology. The most difficult step was to identify two topics and above all keep a good balance in the fact of thinking permanently to LEVEL5 and be natural not to overplay one or the other subjects. The team that applied it had to take some extra time in order to familiarise with the reference system content, but in the end, the LEVEL5 has been perceived as a useful tool in extracurricular activities.

So the effort was real all along the training course and sometimes a bit time-consuming but the result was very finally interesting: the input-output ratio was good beyond our hopes.

3. Preconditions/Pre-knowledge of personnel

LEVEL5 requires a good level of learning and practice. In our case, the coordinator of INSUP participated in a workshop on LEVEL5 and made the link with the new teamwork. In addition the good communication among the partner teachers and trainer leading the learning activity was essential in sharing experiences and collaborating on the tasks to be accomplished.

4. Transferability and perspectives

The system is flexible and very relevant to our training centre. In VET sector, the fact is that the trainers have the obligation to evaluate the trainees and so tools are available. The LEVEL5 methodology allows its users to adapt to the target groups whatever aims, competences or levels: the time-consuming dimension exists when you have to contextualize the reference system to the target group and that can be a problem.

5. Effects

One of the effects on detainees is that LEVEL5 have led them to open their way of thinking about topics to controversy especially in prison. In this place or we do not talk or we solve the problem without discussion. So they made progress in relation to leadership and tolerance competencies:

the idea that any subject can be conceptualized in a 3D cube with multiple levels and dimensions had a strong impact for some of them. Several detainees used the LEVEL5 to signify the family they make progress on themselves, they make an effort and they get closer to re-

habilitation. Even if the problem is not resolved (tolerance), talk is a first step.

For the teachers and the trainer, the LEVEL5 allows them to be more complete and accurate when you have to speak to detainees within the group or in individual interviews. With this target group for instance, you can't say "I disagree with your way to be a leader in this group": your security can not be ensured. Therefore if you can substantiate your communication on the basis of grids including data carefully considered, you're 1) limiting the risk 2) becoming credible.

That's one the immediate effect you take care of your communication. At last for the team, they can show the penitentiary what they achieve for each detainee in these extracurricular activities.

6. Good Practice example – lessons to learn or something in between

Tell a story about the use of LEVEL5 in your testing context, use a narrative form, include the perspective of a learner, a teacher and/or and another relevant stakeholder. Quote some of her, his or their (reflective) statements on the use and effects of using LEVEL5.

For the first time, Education Department and Vocational Training has to collaborate to this project. School generally is very formal with marks and global appreciation on students or pupils. So their first comments were "we're not accustomed to do so much in details" or "I'm forced to focus on one person at the time". These teachers note that it is a cultural change for them "you need time" but and this is contradictory "2 competencies is not enough, 10 will be more efficient".

The trainer was really glad to do the LEVEL5 because she thought "except the diploma, are we going to evaluate them personally?". She was nevertheless a bit confused with the volume of data to deal with even a little bit drowned: she has to evacuate a few days before "recovering to think and to see clearer".

Aristotele University Thessaloniki (AuTh) – Greece

project name:

Validpack: validation of informal and non-formal psycho-pedagogical competencies of adult educators

project description:

“Validation of Informal and Non-Formal Psycho-Pedagogical Competencies of Adult Educators” responds to the European needs by initiating and developing specific measures, instruments, strategies for recognition, validation and certification of the competencies acquired in non-formal and informal settings and contexts – especially for adult educators. Furthermore one of the aim of the project was the validation of SPOCs as part of the psycho-pedagogical competencies of adult educators in Greece.

Start date: 2nd May 2013

End date: 19th July 2013

Content localisation (country):

This pilot took place in Thessaloniki (1 urban KEE), in Athens (1 urban KEK), and in Crete (1 rural KEK in Chania and 1 urban KEE in Heraklion).

Who are the participants of the programme/project?

30 adult educators and CVET trainers with at least 2 year teaching experience but with no formal teaching professional qualification or pedagogical training. Validpack is directed to all educators defined as trainers. That means, if someone is an adult educator who has trainer experiences for more than one year / 150 h of working with adults, they are entitled to use the Validpack and to get their adult educators' competencies be validated.

Descriptions of participants' profiles? (please refer to special characteristics/needs)

As the profession of adult educator is not recognised unless the training is formal and within formally recognised career structures, the involvement of social partners in the recognition of competences of adult learning acquired in an informal, non-formal or formal manner becomes a priority. The fact that often job relevant competences are not covered by traditional qualification documents is an opinion shared among practitioners, researchers and decision-makers involved in adult education; as these competences have been acquired in less traditional and official learning contexts and through a variety of working experiences, they become difficult to standardised and validated, especially as in different countries there are different contexts. A lot of competences that are job relevant have been developed in informal

and non-formal learning contexts. This also applies to the competences defining the adult educator that frequently go unrecognised. A lot of adult educators interact with adults in a didactical way without an explicit qualification for their activity. Most of them have acquired their specific psycho-pedagogical competencies for dealing with adults on the job, through working experiences, during trainings, voluntary work etc.

Why do the learners participate in your course/learning offer?

All participants essentially reflected on their biography and experience in order to self-assess their psycho-pedagogical competences and essentially to respond to the following:

- What are your previous experiences related to your role/position as a trainer in adult education?
- Have you been involved in adult education activities without having an explicit adult education job (consultant, counsellor, coordinator of study groups etc.)? If yes, please mention them.
- What opportunities for initial and further professional development have you taken as a trainer (courses, peer tutoring, mentoring, study visits, internships etc.).
- What other contexts you find as offering relevant/possible opportunities for the achievement of competences defining the performance as a trainer?
- Which concrete abilities/skills can you associate with a concrete learning context? What competencies have you acquired in this context?
- Can you name concrete activities where you learned/acquired competences/things you now use in your adult education work?
- What are the learning outcomes of the profession / home / leisure time / work etc.?

Where does your project/programme take place (school, neighbourhood, club, home etc.)

It took place in 2 Adult Education Centres (KEEs) and 2 CVET Centres (KEKs) in Thessaloniki (1 urban KEE), in Athens (1 urban KEK), and in Crete (1 rural KEK in Chania and 1 urban KEE in Heraklion). During the implementation of the pilot the aim was to look at modes of validation of SPOCs as part of the psycho-pedagogical competencies of adult educators and trainers in continuing VET.

Who initiated the project/activity?

The project was initially initiated by IREA, the Romanian Institute for Adult Education, through the VINEPAC project in which Validpack was developed.

Aims/Goals What are the aims of the project/learning activity from your institution's point of view?

The main aim of the VINEPAC project was to create a set of instruments for the validation of

real competences of adult educators. Adult educators here are defined as trainers. The VINEPAC project team focused on trainer's competency profile as this is the main and more frequent role performed by adult educators in general. A trainer is defined as a person designing and running/ performing teaching activities. The validation of competences of adult educators on European level makes a contribution to professionalisation of adult educators in Europe and to quality management in the field of Adult Education in Europe. Validpack, a package of validation instruments, creates a framework for the documentation and the evaluation of competences of adult educators, no matter whether they have been acquired in formal, non-formal or informal learning contexts. For this reason Validpack aims to:

- a. assess important adult educators competences
- b. give space for the documentation of experiences
- c. build a base for certification upon the validation results
- d. be wide enough to be used on European level
- e. document a minimum standard of competences of adult educators
- f. put adult educators in the position to get across the frontier within Europe
- g. be applicable for different contexts.

During the implementation of the pilot the aim was to look at modes of validation of SPOCs as part of the psycho-pedagogical competencies of adult educators and trainers in continuing VET.

Project/Programme/learning activity. Which activities are carried out?

Validpack is organised around three main validation activities/steps: (i) self evaluation, (ii) external evaluation and (iii) consolidation, which are described more detailed further down. The validation is complete only after all the three steps have been taken. You as an adult educator have to prove the indicated competences that define/are specific for an adult educator. This can either happen through self evaluation or through external evaluation. Some of the most important competences needed in adult education are not directly observable, but can be proved through self evaluation. On the other hand, some competences cannot be easily self assessed, but they need to be observed by an external evaluator. Both steps are provided for in the validation handbook with additional consolidation to increase objectiveness. The handbook will guide you through all validation steps.

Who are the trainers/teachers/guides/helpers? What roles and responsibilities do they have?

All facilitators are from AUTH and they are trained and qualified adult educators. Their role were to select at least five (5) trainers who are operating/ activating in adult education field, no matter if they are activating in vocational education and training field or in general adult

education field. Each facilitator had to provide the trainers the Validpack instrument and to work closely with them in order to help them self-evaluate their competences.

Duration of the learning offer: How many hours/days for the learning activities over which period of time?

80 days in total was the duration of the whole piloting process. This counts to 150 hours over the period between 2 May and 19 July 2013.

What kind of methodology is used?

As it was mentioned earlier the process roughly consisted on the following instruments: mind map, reflection on biography, reflection on competences (social and organizational in particular), "attachment", a possible observation checklist, an interview grid, a validation sheet. In addition to it contained some useful guidelines and indications for adult educators and CVET trainers on how they should approach the validation process. The whole pilot project was organised around three main validation steps: (i) self-evaluation, (ii) external evaluation and (iii) consolidation. The validation was completed only after all the three steps were taken. The process also involved four in-vivo sessions, namely foci groups, in the premises of the adult education centres and CVET structures mentioned previously. 10 adult educators participated in the focus group that was held in Thessaloniki, 10 CVET trainers participated in the focus group that was held in Athens, 5 CVET trainers in the focus group that was held in Chania and 5 adult educators in the focus group that was held in Heraklion, Crete. During these session adult educators and CVET trainers had to explain (with the help of a facilitator that was appointed by George Zarifis who was also present during the entire process) of their understanding and interpretation of SPOC in their own working context and provide their feedback on the implementation of VALIDPACK and LEVEL5 as validation tools. Based on a list of short questions (provided in Greek) the facilitators guided through the sessions. Finally, the facilitators collected the feedback in a voice-recorded format which they later transcribed. During the sessions the adult educators and CVET trainers also worked closely with the facilitators in order to reflect on SPOC and especially to focus on those SPOC that more easily applied in their cases. The facilitators again provided all the instructions. This process ended with a written report in which the facilitators summarized the results of the four sessions according to the reporting grids of LEVEL5.

What is the expected impact of your services offered on participants?

During the first session of testing the facilitator will present the Validpack instrument and next, the trainers will have to take a look on the instrument and to give their feedback on it at first sight. The Capival project partner will provide the facilitator a list of questions that will guide this session. Finally, the facilitator will collect the feedback. During the second session of

testing, the trainers should work closely with Validpack instrument for a two weeks period, time in which they have to reflect on the three parts of the instrument (to analyze the design, the content and the structure of the instrument) and especially to focus on the first part (to apply the self-evaluation part on themselves). The project partner will provide the facilitator instructions for this testing session. After the two weeks period, the facilitator will meet the trainers (face to face meeting or virtual meeting and will collect their feedback) according to a grid provided by the project partners.

Development of competencies

Which particular competence(s) do you assess in the project?

We assessed 3 competences: communication, self-reflection and problem-solving.

Substantiated/contextualized reference system is ENCLOSED

Yes

How is the LEVEL5 integrated in the learning activity? Is it added to an already planned activity/taken in consideration during the planning? When and how are the LEVEL5 cube presented for the learners?

LEVEL5 was integrated in the pilot learning activity from the beginning as a way of self-assessing and self-evaluating the psycho-pedagogical competences who participated in the process. The LEVEL5 cube was presented to all participants prior to the Validpack process and the initial idea was the whole process to take place on-line through a platform that was developed for the BACK TO WORK project that introduced a tool for competence validation for employment counsellors, in which we were involved. However the coordinator of that project refused to give access to our participants with the argument that BACK TO WORK platform must be accessed only by employment counsellors. However and since we had already located our participants we decided to visit them ourselves and do the whole process in situ. It must noted at this point that the pilot was based on the validation procedures prescribed in Validpack, but within the logic of LEVEL5. The fact that often job relevant competences - SPOC in particular- are not covered by traditional qualification documents is an opinion shared among practitioners, researchers and decision-makers involved in adult education in Greece and elsewhere; as these competences have been acquired in less traditional and official learning contexts and through a variety of working experiences, they become difficult to standardized and validated, especially as in different countries there are different contexts. However, the attempt to validate or accredit prior learning is common: the accreditation of previous & experiential learning (APEL), the French „Bilan de compétence” – not limited to a specific profession, the Swiss Qualifications book „CH-Q”, the German „ProfilPass” or the

German „skills analysis”, are only some of the examples used to validate job relevant competencies in Europe. Generally speaking the validation of competences can be described as a process of competence identification, competence measurement and competence assessment that can be done using different methods and instruments. A lot of competences that are job relevant have been developed in informal and non-formal learning contexts. This also applies to the competences defining the adult educator that frequently go unrecognized. A lot of adult educators and trainers interact with adults in a didactical way without an explicit qualification (i.e. a higher education degree in education or pedagogy or andragogy or didactics) for their activity. Most of them have acquired their specific psycho-pedagogical competencies for dealing with adults on the job, through working experiences, during on-the-job trainings, through voluntary work or simply by dwelling with adult learners. According to the above mentioned social and economic new developments and challenges in Europe validation of informal and non-formal psycho-pedagogical competences of adult educators as part of SPOC, needs to be applied by initiating and developing specific measures, instruments, strategies for recognition, validation and certification of the competences acquired in non-formal and informal settings and contexts – especially for adult educators and CVET trainers. Within the context of psycho-pedagogical competences therefore the following SPOC were evaluated: communication competence, intercultural competence (social), self-reflection competence (personal) and problem-solving competence (organizational). In this process LEVEL5 was essentially integrated in Validpack approach.

Assessment method(s)

Self-assessment, focus groups, interviews and observations.

Experiences

The reflection on biography acted as a smooth introduction to the whole process since the adult trainer recalls his previous experiences and commences thinking reflectively. The mind map is a useful way for the user to concisely illustrate what was previously mentioned and in a way visualize it. Following, the reflection on competences takes a “deeper dive” into user’s skills and abilities while, finally, the attachment of the validating documents, fosters the objectivity and validity of the research – assisting researcher’s work – as well as helps the user understand which competences he/she “officially” has. As the majority of participants see it, it is organized in a correct way as the self-evaluation introduces the user to the whole process by engaging him/her to a process of self-reflection. Subsequently, the external evaluation acts supportively to the first stage by enabling the researcher to draw more objective conclusions. Finally, the consolidation stage brings the two previous stages together and as a consequence, both participants gain an overall, deep understanding of their work. The instrument

is clear and well-structured and organised. It is accessible and easy to understand from the first instant. All together –especially the self-evaluation section as most trainers have noted– is comprehensive and useful as it gives the opportunity to trainers and educators to look upon certain issues they haven't thought before. The appearance is attractive and easy to use. However, it would be more convenient if it had the form of a book instead of a folder; a book with pages that could be detached from the main body. Organization and structure is very clear and so is the methodology. The three steps are very easy to understand and also to respond. Perhaps some parts are too extensive but this is also understandable. If it is to be translated in Greek accessible language should be used as some questions needed clarification by the facilitators. This is easy to adapt in the Greek context considering that the majority of those acting as adult educators and trainers have no degrees (some perhaps have the certification from EKEPIS, the National Accreditation Centre but this is different). The language needs to be clear and perhaps some examples on how to fill in sections like in the self-evaluation step and consolidation could be useful. Also a short pilot procedure before applying the instrument to different groups would also be useful as many adult educators in Greece would be skeptical in using this instrument for their validation. Finally, it is also important to consider who will apply this instrument. If it is the University it is reliable, but trainers should not be under the impression that this validation equals to a university degree or certificate. After the instrument is translated into Greek we will have to make it known to those interested. A way of disseminating this form of validation will also demand adaptation to the laws and ministerial decisions on validation and APEL that will be enacted soon.

1. Feasibility and usability

Strengths:

- Its clarity and layout.
- Its targeted scope.
- The fact that it is accessible.
- The fact that it demands interaction between the trainers and the facilitators.
- The separate three steps/phases are crystal clear in their scope and easy to follow by
- anyone who uses the instrument.

Weaknesses:

- Its length, as it is somewhat too long and occasionally demands by those who use it extra care in feeling the different fields.
- The fact that the interview section is not very well defined and needs more elabora-

tion.

- It can only be applied based on the existence of a national system or strategy on validation or APEL.

2. Efforts and acceptance

The appearance is attractive and easy to use. However, it would be more convenient if it had the form of a book instead of a folder; a book with pages that could be detached from the main body. Organization and structure is very clear and so is the methodology. The three steps are very easy to understand and also to respond. Perhaps some parts are too extensive but this is also understandable. If it is to be translated in Greek accessible language should be used as some questions needed clarification by the facilitators.

3. Preconditions/Pre-knowledge of personnel

The instrument is clear and well-structured and organised. It is accessible and easy to understand from the first instant. All together –especially the self-evaluation section as most trainers have noted– is comprehensive and useful as it gives the opportunity to trainers and educators to look upon certain issues they haven't thought before.

4. Transferability and perspectives

This is easy to adapt in the Greek context considering that the majority of those acting as adult educators and trainers have no degrees (some perhaps have the certification from EKEPIS, the National Accreditation Centre but this is different). The language needs to be clear and perhaps some examples on how to fill in sections like in the self-evaluation step and consolidation could be useful. Also a short pilot procedure before applying the instrument to different groups would also be useful as many adult educators in Greece would be skeptical in using this instrument for their validation. Finally, it is also important to consider who will apply this instrument. If it is the University it is reliable, but trainers should not be under the impression that this validation equals to a university degree or certificate.

5. Effects

Perhaps it would be useful if self-evaluation could be processed on-line as well as consolidation. It is not always easy to access adult educators and trainers or arrange a certain time to meet with them. External evaluation of course is different as the evaluator needs to be present and observe but also take the interview. The interview could also take place through the phone or on-line through 'skype' or teleconferencing when this is possible maybe.

6. Good Practice example – lessons to learn or something in between Tell a story about the use of LEVEL5 in your testing context, use a narrative form, include the perspective of a

learner, a teacher and/or and another relevant stakeholder. Quote some of her, his or their (reflective) statements on the use and effects of using LEVEL5.

Based on the feedback of the participants the instrument is clear and well-structured and organised. It is easy to comprehend and from the beginning all facilitators were attracted by its format. The language is clear and simple. When it is translated to Greek, similar language should be used.

Future perspectives and other reflections

It will be well received depending on whether it is or not adapted to the national legislation. If the validation is used and provided by trained people from the University then the degree of reliability will be high and many adult educators and trainers without any credentials but with long experience in the area will decide to come and be validated. If it is provided by an external organization i.e. non-university or even more so irrelevant to adult education and training, then many people will look at it in a suspicious way as similar attempts were not well received lately. For example the EOPPEP certifies trainers but now most trainers would rather go and have a degree instead. The university is a good place to provide validation using this instrument.

Bupnet 1 – Germany

project name:

Specialised and Applied Palliative Care (SAPV)

project description:

This learning project was a certified qualification course for employees in the field of geriatric care in rural areas in northern Germany on the issue of palliative care. Palliative care is understood as an individual, holistic care and support strategy for people with incurable diseases and people in the last phase of their lives. The course, awarding with a credited certificate in line with German care law, was organised in several extra occupational modules and took place from Mai to October 2013. The course focused on the key issues and problems of palliative care and provided insights, viewpoints, and the corresponding social, technical and methodological skills. In 6 modules the participants learned the basic knowledge of pain management and symptom control; Burn -out and self-care: psychological aspects of coping; communication and working with relatives; special possibilities of basic care and treatment; dealing with dying, death and grief; religious , cultural and ethical aspects of palliative care.

Of the project

Of the trainings:

Start date: 01st of November 2011

Start date: 28th of February 2013

End date: 31st of October 2013

End date: 31st of July 2013

Content localisation (country):

Bad Iburg, Stade, Germany

Who are the participants of the programme/project?

Female employees of nursing homes for elderly or ambulatory care services with at least three years of work experience in the field.

Descriptions of participants' profiles? (please refer to special characteristics/needs)

Learning besides working and the goal to gain a certificate, some by order of the employer, imposed heavy weight on the shoulders of the learners and had to be taken into account for the design of the course and lessons to be held. This was met by choosing adequate methods of teaching, reducing theory to a minimum and by leaving open spaces for discussions

about issues of importance to the participants, e.g. how to cope with stress.

Why do the learners participate in your course/learning offer?

The motivation to participate was to gain the certified degree as precondition to work in the palliative care of elderly. Most participants were registered by their employers as it is part of German care law that nursing homes and services have to provide specialised staff to take care of patients suffering from constant pain and/or in the process of dying.

Where does your project/programme take place (school, neighbourhood, club, home etc.)

The courses took place in regular seminar rooms and during the job shadowing in the nursing homes the participants work at.

Who initiated the project/activity?

It was a commercial course offer by BUPNET with additional funding of the European Social Fund for Lower Saxony, Germany..

Aims/Goals

What are the aims of the project/learning activity from your institution's point of view?

The goal was to enable all participants to pass the final exam and to gain the degree.

The focus of the qualification is to develop individual nursing and care concepts, aimed at those concerned.

Project/Programme/learning activity. Which activities are carried out?

Lecture, moderated reflection rounds and facilitation of the learning content at the workplace

Who are the trainers/teachers/guides/helpers? What roles and responsibilities do they have?

The teachers were several specialised freelance lecturers hired for this course by BUPNET.

Duration of the learning offer: How many hours/days for the learning activities over which period of time?

The course consisted of 160 teaching hours in classroom blocks of three days each, plus 40 hours shadowing to deepen the theoretical content. The lessons were held from 09.00 - 16.00 o'clock.

What kind of methodology is used?

Theoretical inputs, moderated reflection rounds, work shadowing

What is the expected impact of your services offered on participants?

Generally elderly care is a working field known to be highly demanding physically as well as mentally. At the same time this work generally isn't paid very well. This leads to a high fluc-

tuation of staff and the early drop out of the job before reaching pension age.

The course primarily enabled the participants to take over new responsibilities in their teams based on their new degrees. It also contributed to their social mobility and facilitated job changes to other employers.

In regard to informal learning the issue of stress and how to cope with it was a cross cutting topic throughout the course and even after.

The expected impact of the competence assessment was to raise the participants awareness on their informal learning in regard to constructively cope with stress and thus to create recognition and a feeling of success.

Development of competencies

Which particular competence(s) do you assess in the project?

Ability to cope with (chronic) stress

Substantiated/contextualized reference system

See annex

How is the LEVEL5 integrated in the learning activity? Is it added to an already planned activity/ taken in consideration during the planning? When and how are the LEVEL5 cube presented for the learners?

The competence assessment was not integrated into the course. It took place approximately 3 months after the end of the course.

Assessment method(s)

Guided (telephonic) interviews based on interview questionnaires

Experiences

Piloting strategy and methods

The aim of the piloting was to evaluate the development of competencies related to cope with (chronic) stress as integral part of the work of a nurse.

The choice of the topic was based on the notion that this competence is crucial in order to be able to permanently work in this field, which is characterized by heavy physical and mental burdens and low salary. Also this was the main cross cutting issue for the participants, frequently discussed on the side during all the modules of the course, indicating the high impor-

tance dealing with stress has for the nurses.

The assignment (as internal service at BUPNET) to evaluate the course was given only after it had ended so that it was not possible to integrate the assessment into the course nor to do an ex ante assessment. Thus the procedure had to be planned in a way that made it possible to cover the before-state as well, retrospectively getting answers about a state about 6 months before. In order to achieve this and to gain meaningful results the strategy developed built on the close relationship and great confidence that had developed between the participating ladies and the course manager, who was the one giving the lectures on burnout prevention during the course. It was assumed that participants would feel more free to speak about their coping with stress with someone they know well, rather than if questioned by someone external or in a paper questionnaire.

Thus telephone based interviews were conducted which followed an interview questionnaire, that served to document the results as well.

The interview questionnaire was designed in to cover the before and after and to deliver indicators to allocate the answers to the respective levels and dimensions in the reference system. Literature on coping with stress plus the contents conveyed during the course in the module about burn-out prevention were the knowledge basis for producing the described materials.

Before the interviews were held the materials went through a feedback loop, being commented by persons working in the field and knowing the target group and their understanding of questions well and were then refined accordingly.

The analysis of the results and the ratings, including reasoning was also time consuming as the questionnaire was quite complex and indicators were very individual, which made it difficult to standardise the rating procedure. A rough structure resulted from dividing coping strategies for stress into several categories, e.g. such aiming at relief on the physical, social or individual level in terms of self-perception and expectations. Also the intensity and frequency of the application of certain coping strategies was considered for the ratings.

The results of the individual ratings were offered to the participants during the interviews. They were informed about the context of the evaluation and application of the results and guaranteed anonymity. Those who were interested were marked by the interviewer to later receive certificates. These were distributed in November 2013 to 8 of the 12 persons inter-

viewed. For the purpose of VITA anonymized certificates was created for all learners who participated in the interviews.

1. Feasibility and usability

Use of LEVEL5 in the development of social competence:

In this case LEVEL5 was applied following a dual purpose:

- to document the development of the competence to individually cope with (chronic) stress as crucial cross cutting competence relevant for working as nurse for elderly and/or in palliative care.
- to display the impact of the course module and to gather information if improvement or adaption of the offer is needed.

LEVEL5 was not integrated into the course, so it is not possible to comment on the impact it would have had for the development of the competency assessed, as the reflective interviews were held after and no follow up assessment is planned.

Generally it can be said that reflecting on ones own learning stimulates competence development and may create motivation to further improvement.

Based on the results of the evaluation there clearly was a development in the observed competence for all persons interviewed.

The LEVEL5 method was presented to the course manager doing the assessments and very well received, as method to support the self-reflection of the learners and also to give proof of informal learning outcomes to the participants they can use on their further professional paths. The learners were open for the assessment as they felt that the topic is important for them personally and were open to reflect their learning progress in this regard. The ones deciding to receive certificates documenting their learning outcome weren't sure if they would use it to display their development towards others, like the employer, but appreciated to have a documentation in which their learning is contextualized against the reference system.

Regarding the results of the evaluation, the focus on the three dimensions of learning as displayed in LEVEL5 allow a broader and more complete perspective on learning of SPOC, as for these competences the affective dimension seems to be crucial and thus needs to be taken into account when thinking about competence development in general.

Setting up the materials becomes easier the more experience one has. Most difficult was the creation of questionnaires that allow grounded ratings of the competence development. Here the experience is that it is important to design the questions in a way that they can be easily understood by the target group and needs to take into consideration their life situations, edu-

cational level as well as attitude towards being questioned on something, e.g. in this case not to get the feeling of being examined. Several checks and feedbacks by external persons were needed in order to get an adequate tool.

This project proved that retrospective assessments are possible and lead to satisfying results. The main difficulty in this regard was the design of the assessment materials, as they needed to be much more complex and sophisticated as if the before and after assessments would be pursued in two separate situations. The interview situation made it possible to stimulate the participants' reflection by additional questions. If it would have been a pure paper based survey it can be guessed that it would have been much more difficult to gain meaningful results. The results of the evaluation, the certificates, were sent to the participants by mail and anonymized for the evaluation report provided to BUPNET and for VITA.

2. Efforts and acceptance

The effort of applying LEVEL5 was intensive but reasonable, as preparation for further applications. It is planned to establish the competence assessment with LEVEL5 in further courses on palliative care at BUPNET.

Timewise the setting up and refinement of the reference system took about 1,5 working days, one before setting up the reference system and another few hours to refine it according to the answers received, which provided further insights into the topic and needed to be integrated into the learning outcome description.

The creation of the questionnaire was the hardest part and took about two days. The analysis of the results and the ratings, including reasoning was also time consuming as the questionnaire was quite complex and indicators were very individual, which made it difficult to standardise the rating procedure. A rough structure resulted from dividing coping strategies for stress into several categories, e.g. such aiming at relief on the physical, social or individual level in terms of self-perception and expectations. Also the intensity and frequency of the application of certain coping strategies was considered for the ratings.

Due to the number of learners assessed, the definition of the rating procedure and writing the learning outcome descriptions took approximately 3 days.

3. Preconditions/Pre-knowledge of personnel

In our case the evaluator was experienced in the use of LEVEL5. By this experience it can be said that a repeated application helps a lot to become more secure and aware of strengths and limits of the procedure. Crucial are the assessment methods that are decisive for the

quality of the results. Also knowledge about the target group and their preconditions towards learning in general and certain contents is helpful for setting up materials that are adequate to the learners' background (contextualization). Further it is crucial that the reference system and the assessment instruments are synchronized in order to allow grounded statements about the learning progress and a certain degree of standardization in the rating procedure in order to make it time efficient.

4. Transferability and perspectives

I have applied LEVEL5 in a number of contexts and with different target groups. Each time one has to set up new concepts, decide on competences to assess and contextualise them to the learners. Same with the assessment methods, that need to be chosen based on context and accessibility to the learners and maybe need to be created especially for certain purposes. Generally transferability is given. The method is open enough to be transferred to whichever learning activity. The transfer becomes easier and faster if one has experience and some sovereignty in the use of it. Ideally concepts and materials produced can be used repeatedly in reoccurring learning offers thus reducing the effort and raising the efficiency of the evaluator.

5. Effects

The outcome of the evaluation was satisfactory. It could be shown, that all participants improved their way of coping with stress in one way or another. The interview questionnaire included a question on the state of well-being before and after to allow a cross check and almost all persons interviewed stated a more or less significant improvement of their subjective well-being.

Interestingly most participants intensified their coping strategies in regard to their social environment and interaction, like active conflict solving or using opportunities to exchange about stressful experiences, and those in regard to their self-image and the expectations directed towards themselves. The intensification of physical measures was mentioned comparatively seldom. The results of the knowledge dimension showed least variance. A possible explanation for this result could be the similar educational level and work context of the participants and the fact that they all received the same inputs.

Generally both goals of the assessment were reached. The interviews delivered statements about the acceptance of and satisfaction with the burn-out prevention module as well as giving impulses for self-reflection and further learning to the learners.

This project proved that retrospective assessments are possible and lead to satisfying re-

sults. The main difficulty in this regard was the design of the assessment materials, as they needed to be much more complex and sophisticated as if the before and after assessments would be pursued in two separate situations.

6. Good Practice example – lessons to learn or something in between

Tell a story about the use of LEVEL5 in your testing context, use a narrative form, include the perspective of a learner, a teacher and/or and another relevant stakeholder. Quote some of her, his or their (reflective) statements on the use and effects of using LEVEL5.

See narrative

Future perspectives and other reflections

LEVEL5 is a valuable instrument to assess and visualise progress in competence developments informally gained. Already we're working on applying the approach to courses in the health care sector and for a youths training on soft skills. Therefore new reference systems have been developed focusing on the competences on communication as team leader in the nursing sector and communication in a team for the youngsters. The experiences gathered in SuperMAN and Palliative Care are valuable and helpful to reduce future effort and for the design of the assessment and rating procedures.

Bupnet 2 - Germany

project name:

SuperMAN – Supermarkets meet accessibility needs

project description:

SuperMAN aims at opening the theme of accessibility to the social level, specifically in aiming at promoting accessibility for mentally disabled people. The problems to tackle are cognitive and psychic difficulties and the barriers are more relational and cultural than architectonic.

Considering the specific needs of mentally disabled people, the project aims to design and implement actions to allow them to become fully socially included. In 2007 in France, some supermarkets implement training courses for their staff in order to make supermarkets accessible places for mentally disabled people. SuperMAN's goal was to import the good practice developed in France to Italy and Germany. The project aims to promote access for mentally disabled people to public spaces in accordance with the European priority of promoting inclusion and equality combating discrimination based on disability.

Of the project

Of the trainings:

Start date: 01st of November 2011

Start date: 28th of February 2013

End date: 31st of October 2013

End date: 31st of July 2013

Content localisation (country):

Germany

Who are the participants of the programme/project?

Supermarket staff (management and salespersons)

Descriptions of participants' profiles? (please refer to special characteristics/needs)

Supermarket staff usually learns and grows on the job. They have a vocational training as salespersons but most participants have no academic or theoretical background, or knowledge on learning or the social psychology of customers, but much experience in practically dealing with customers. All salespersons have to fulfill a self-learning module on customer service when getting employed by the supermarket.

Why do the learners participate in your course/learning offer?

Supermarket staff registered for the training voluntarily and individually, feeling a need to learn how to better deal with mentally handicapped persons or those suffering from dementia,

as these persons regularly challenge them in their working life.

Other motivations to participate were:

- private/personal interest due to cases of dementia or cognitive disability in own social surrounding
- expectations from the management level to participate in the campaign
- interest to get the logo and good pr for the own market

Where does your project/programme take place (school, neighborhood, club, home etc.)

The trainings took place in meeting venues, such as hotels, within an average distance of 50 km to the supermarkets the participants work at. The practical part of applying the training content took place at the work places, the supermarkets.

Who initiated the project/activity?

The learning activity was initiated in the framework of a Leonardo Transfer of Innovation project coordinated by Kara Bobowski from Italy in cooperation with Les Papillon Blancs from France and the county of Kassel and BUPNET and blinc in Germany. In Germany Tegut agreed to be partner in the piloting for the training concept that was to be transferred from France to Germany and Italy.

Aims/Goals

What are the aims of the project/learning activity from your institution's point of view?

Aim of the learning activity was to enhance the participants' skills to adequately deal with customers with special needs deriving from their cognitive disabilities and to sensitize them for the topic of inclusion.

Project/Programme/learning activity. Which activities are carried out?

Lecture and facilitation of the learning content at the workplace

Who are the trainers/teachers/guides/helpers? What roles and responsibilities do they have?

The teacher was a consultant and lecturer at BUPNET.

Duration of the learning offer: How many hours/days for the learning activities over which period of time?

5 hours of training, 9:00 - 14:00

What kind of methodology is used?

Theoretical inputs, moderated reflection rounds, role plays

What is the expected impact of your services offered on participants?

The expected impact of the learning activity is to raise self-awareness and create benefits for customers with cognitive disorders.

Development of competencies

Which particular competence(s) do you assess in the project?

Customer orientation towards clients with cognitive disabilities

Substantiated/contextualized reference system

See annex

How is the LEVEL5 integrated in the learning activity? Is it added to an already planned activity/ taken in consideration during the planning? When and how are the LEVEL5 cube presented for the learners?

This evaluation was not communicated as LEVEL5 evaluation but as measure of quality assurance. Hence it wasn't introduced explicitly to the participants of the training nor integrated into the learning activity.

The LEVEL5 evaluation was based on evaluation questionnaires handed out at the end of the training and partly on contributions of the participants during the training and documented directly after for the first assessment. The second assessment was based on questionnaires only.

Assessment method(s)

Mainly Self-assessment by questionnaires, plus observation by trainer

Experiences

Piloting strategy and methods

The aim of the piloting was to evaluate with LEVEL5 the development of competencies related to delivering good service to customers with cognitive disabilities and/or dementia.

Also it was supposed to deliver experience based knowledge of how to apply LEVEL5 in a very short training setting followed by a transfer phase of the contents to the every day working life of the supermarket staff with no further direct contact to the participants. The hidden evaluation was chosen, so that the participants don't get the feeling they'd be under observation by the headquarter of Tegut, as the training was promoted through the management level of Tegut, who had just before merged with Swiss Migros, which created a lot of uncertainty among the staff in the markets.

1. Feasibility and usability

Use of LEVEL5 in the development of social competence:

In this case LEVEL5 was applied to document the development of the competence to serve customers with cognitive disorders well. The motivation was to be able to display the impact of the training and to gather information if improvement or adaption of the training offer is needed.

As it was a hidden evaluation and LEVEL5 not integrated into the training it is hard to comment on the impact for the development of the competency assessed.

Generally spoken and based on the results of the evaluation there definitively was a development in the observed competence.

The evaluation was planned and carried out by the trainer with no other persons involved, besides the persons giving feedback to the assessment instruments. Thus feedback on the LEVEL5 approach from externals and participants is missing in this case.

Regarding the results of the evaluation, the focus on the three dimensions of learning as displayed in LEVEL5 allow a broader and more complete perspective on learning SPOC, as for these competences the affective dimension seems to be crucial and thus needs to be taken into account when thinking about competence development of SPOC.

Setting up the materials becomes easier the more experience one has. Most difficult was the creation of questionnaires that allow grounded ratings of the competence development. Here the experience is that several checks and feedbacks by external persons are necessary in order to get an adequate tool.

2. Efforts and acceptance

The effort of applying LEVEL5 was intensive but reasonable, as it served to improve a training offer that has the potential to be sold on a large scale in Germany, as the training was connected to a certification as “supermarket accessible to persons with cognitive disabilities and dementia”.

Time wise the setting up and refinement of the reference system took about one working day. The creation of the questionnaire, the hardest part, about two days and the logistics of mailing out the questionnaires about half a day. The analysis of the results and the ratings, including reasoning was comparatively quick, as the flow back was very low, and done within one day. Out of 50 that were sent out only 11 questionnaires were returned of which 5 were not filled completely.

3. Preconditions/Pre-knowledge of personnel

In our case the evaluator was experienced in the use of LEVEL5. By this experience it can be said that a repeated application helps a lot to become more secure and aware of strengths

and limits of the procedure. Crucial are the assessment methods that are decisive for the quality of the results. Also knowledge about the target group and their preconditions towards learning in general and certain contents is helpful for setting up materials that are adequate to the learners background (contextualisation).

4. Transferability and perspectives

I have applied LEVEL5 in a number of contexts and with different target groups. Each time one has to set up new concepts, decide on competences to assess and contextualise them to the learners. Same with the assessment methods, that need to be chosen based on context and accessibility to the learners and maybe need to be created especially for certain purposes. Generally transferability is given. The method is open enough to be transferred to whichever learning activity. The transfer becomes easier and faster if one has experience and some sovereignty in the use of it.

5. Effects

The outcome of the evaluation is satisfactory. It could be shown, that all participants improved their way of dealing with cognitive disabled clients in one dimension or the other. Some participants mainly improved on the knowledge level, having a positive attitude and acting accordingly already at the beginning. Others questioned their own views on disability and mainly show improvement on the affective side. The assessment helped to differentiate the learners' needs in regard to the superman training offer. It was shown that older employees are much more advanced in dealing with special needs customers, just by their professional experience. Thus training for older staff needs other emphasis than a training for younger supermarket staff in regard to the relation of theoretical inputs and space for reflection and exchange.

6. Good Practice example – lessons to learn or something in between

Tell a story about the use of LEVEL5 in your testing context, use a narrative form, include the perspective of a learner, a teacher and/or and another relevant stakeholder. Quote some of her, his or their (reflective) statements on the use and effects of using LEVEL5.

The topic of the superman training was inclusion of persons with cognitive handicaps and/or dementia into everyday life, specifically shopping at the supermarket. It was interesting to see that especially experienced personnel had a quite natural way of dealing with these clients, even without any concrete knowledge about these persons. Just based on intuition and experience participants were able to give examples of difficult situations that were solved correctly only by intuition and experience. For these the training and the evaluation questionnaire

mainly had the function to reassure them in their ways of doing.

Younger participants explicitly stated that they learned to view the issue from a new perspective and that it is helpful for them to understand more about the target group. Also the interactive dimension of learning could clearly be observed, as the exchange between the participants was considered highly valuable by all participants, regardless of their age.

Future perspectives and other reflections

LEVEL5 is a valuable instrument to assess and visualise progress in competence developments informally gained. Already we're working on applying the approach to courses in the health care sector. Therefore new reference systems have been developed focusing on the competences to cope with stress and on communication as team leader in the nursing sector. The experiences gathered in Superman are valuable for the development of new approaches.

BLINC - Italy

project name:

SUPER M.A.N (Supermarkets Meet Accessibility Needs) in Italy

project description:

SUPER M.A.N aims at analysing the field of accessibility for mentally disabled people. The problems to tackle are cognitive and psychic difficulties and the barriers are more relational and cultural than architectonic. Considering the specific needs of mentally disabled people, the project aims to design and implement actions to allow them a fully social inclusion. In 2007 in France, some supermarkets implement training courses for their staff in order to make supermarkets accessible places for mentally disabled people. SUPER M.A.N goal is to import the good practice developed in France to Italy and Germany.

The project aims to promote mentally disabled people in accordance with the European priority of promoting inclusion and equality combating discrimination based on disability.

Start date 1st October 2011

End date 30th September 2013

Content localisation (country):

Forli, Italy

Who are the participants of the programme/project?

Employees of supermarkets

Descriptions of participants' profiles? (please refer to special characteristics/needs)

Employees of supermarkets are usually cashiers and do not hold a high level education degree. They are constantly dealing with the customers of the supermarkets.

Why do the learners participate in your course/learning offer?

Participants were selected by their supervisors according to the interest showed in regard to the training.

Where does your project/programme take place (school, neighbourhood, club, home etc.)

The training was divided in 3 phases:

- 1 day face-to-face training in a conference room inside a supermarket;
- 3 months of practical period at their workplace;
- 1 day face-to-face wrap-up session and LEVEL5 evaluation.

Who initiated the project/activity?

The learning activity was initiated through a partnership between the French organisation Papillons Blancs and the Italian social cooperative Kara Bobowski who then approached the Municipality of Kassel, blinc and BUPNET.

Aims/Goals

What are the aims of the project/learning activity from your institution's point of view?

From the point of view of blinc, the aim of the learning activity is to assess the participants' development of the competence "client orientation in relation to clients with cognitive disorders.

Project/Programme/learning activity. Which activities are carried out?

-Facilitation of group work and of action learning (such as role-plays)
-Practical phase in the workplace

Who are the trainers/teachers/guides/helpers? What roles and responsibilities do they have?

-Two trainers, psychologists, carried out the initial training and the wrap up training.
-One LEVEL5 expert from the REVEAL network developed a specific reference system and assessment tools and guided the self and tandem evaluation during the wrap up session.

Duration of the learning offer: How many hours/days for the learning activities over which period of time?

2 days of face-to-face training and a practical phase at the workplace over a period of 3 months.

What kind of methodology is used?

Action learning, group works, role-plays, learning diary

What is the expected impact of your services offered on participants?

The expected impact of the learning activity together with other activities in the implementation programme is more confident and satisfactory client orientation in relation to clients with cognitive disorders

Development of competencies

Which particular competence(s) do you assess in the project?

Client orientation in relation to clients with cognitive disorders

Substantiated/contextualized reference system is ENCLOSED

See attachment

How is the LEVEL5 integrated in the learning activity? Is it added to an already planned activity/ taken in consideration during the planning? When and how are the LEVEL5 cube presented for the learners?

LEVEL5 was integrated in the learning activity from the very beginning. A specific reference system was developed according to the needs of the participants and the context of the learning activity and then shared with the trainers. During the initial face-to-face training the trainer briefly and simply introduced LEVEL5 to the participants, explaining that the development of the competence was going to be assessed at the end of the learning activity. Also, participants were asked to keep a learning diary during the 3 months of the practical phase and wrote the first entry during the face-to-face event.

Then, during the final face-to-face session, at the end of the 3 months, a LEVEL5 expert explained again to the participants the concept of this innovative system, going more in details and showing the cube. Then, the expert guided the self and tandem assessment.

Assessment method(s)

Mix of self-evaluation and tandem evaluation.

Experiences

Piloting strategy and methods

The aim of the piloting was to evaluate LEVEL5 in the assessment of a high number of participants (around 40).

The piloting focused on how to manage the workload and assure quality and usability of the evaluation process and the LEVEL5 certificate.

The piloting consisted in five main phases:

- 1) Development of a specific reference system on “client orientation in relation to clients with cognitive disorders” adapted on the basis of the reference system on “client orientation” and selection of evaluation tools designed for the participants’ needs and the context of the learning activity:
 - An electronic learning diary with guided questions. Participants are asked to write the first entry during the first face-to-face event in order to help them remember their starting point. Participants are then encouraged to write down, at least once a week, their feelings, reactions, and any other thing that they believe meaningful. Such learning diary is not mandatory and it is made very clear that the diary remains personal

and neither the assessor nor the trainer will ask them to read it. It is designed to help the participants to keep track of their developments, if they need it, during the entire learning activity (3 months).

- a self-assessment questionnaire with 15 questions covering all three dimensions (cognitive, active and affective) with the aim to introduce the participants to the grids of the reference system. The questionnaire is given to the participants during the final training session, after the detailed presentation of the LEVEL5 assessment system.
- 2) Creation of pre-formatted learning outcomes for each level and dimension, and semi-pre-formatted evaluation summary.
- 3) A short and simple presentation of LEVEL5 during the initial face-to-face event by one of the trainers explaining general aims and next steps.
- 4) A detailed explanation of LEVEL5 methodology by a REVEAL expert during the final face-to-face session at the end of the practical phase and guided self assessment and tandem assessment. After filling in the self-assessment questionnaire, participants are asked to position themselves on the grids of the reference system. For each dimension they select the levels of the starting and ending point and try to give some explanatory examples. Then, they turn to their neighbor to proceed with the tandem evaluation. They explain to their peer why they positioned themselves at that level, enter into a discussion and may confirm or change their choices. Then, they will write each other's summary evaluation for each dimension filling in the sentence given by the format.
Finally, the questionnaires and the grids are collected by the evaluator.
- 5) Transferring the results of the assessment in the pre-formatted grid for each participant to make the LEVEL5 certificate. Delivering of the certificates.

A guiding principle for us in the piloting was to find a system to facilitate the management of the high number of learners, fastening the process of transferring data in the software and, at the same time, assuring good quality of the certificates. The idea of pre-formatted learning outcomes worked very well and can be easily transferred to other projects.

1. Feasibility and usability

The results achieved are to be considered extremely positive, in fact, not only we were able to meet the goal of managing a high number of assessments with good quality, but the approach developed and tested in the pilot (of pre-formatted learning outcomes) is extremely interesting since it can be transferred and used in any other learning activity. In particular, it allows:

- To reduce the working hours and the efforts of the staff involved in the assessment, the elaboration of the data and the production of the certificates.
- To always assure a good quality certificate, even in cases where the material handed by the participant is weak in some parts or the learner has poor writing skills.
- To improve the usability of self-assessments and, as already mentioned,
- To manage a high number of assessments.

As a general remark, the system was extremely useful in helping the learner realising the learning process and its results.

One suggestion to improve the experience is to use neutral learning outcomes, using for instance “the participant” or “the learner”, instead of changing every time the name of the participant in the descriptions. It is time consuming and errors are easy to occur.

Also, in case of pure self-assessment, the system could offer just pre-formatted learning outcomes without the summary of the learning process and the summary of the evaluation.

2. Efforts and acceptance

Considering the high number of learners efforts seem to be acceptable.

To describe the system, it took 15 minutes during the initial face-to-face training and other 20 minutes during the wrap-up session. Then, participants evaluated themselves through self and tandem assessment for 1 hour.

From the expert/trainer’s point of view, the most time consuming activity is the creation of a pre-formatted learning outcomes grid. Once it has been created, the evidence phase and the production of the certificates is relatively fast and the time effort depends on the number of the participants.

The system is extremely practicable and the outcomes are widely accepted. At beginning, one concern was that the participants would have found the description of their learning outcomes too neutral and impersonal. On the contrary, all trainers, partners and participants though that the certificates really showed their learning process. In particular, during the final conference, the blinc team carried out a few interviews to assess the acceptance and the relevance of LEVEL5 certificates. All participants interviewed expressed very high appreciation for the training and the LEVEL5 certificate that explained their learning development. They thought that the certificate clearly reflected their journey and also helped them realise it, when they received it they felt proud and got emotional. One of them said that she would

have hang it on her counter and all of them had already talked about it with their colleagues. They stated that, once it was explained to them, the system was not hard to understand and they appreciated the guidance during the assessment. The trainer that was interviewed is a psychologist and, even if he was not familiar with the system, said that it seemed extremely fitting to the training methodology that he used, in particular for role-plays and group works. Finally, the supermarkets' responsible expressed great appreciation for the outcomes of the training, including LEVEL5 assessment and are willing to buy the training package for other supermarkets.

Overall, the input-output ration was very good and there is a potential to improve our work as LEVEL5 service providers. Also, we experienced the gaining of a certain routine in creating the pre-formatted learning outcomes, making us believe that such activity will be always less and less time consuming. To conclude, the results in term of efforts and acceptance are extremely positive.

3. Preconditions/Pre-knowledge of personnel

Most of the learners did not hold a high education degree and none of them had previous experience with competence assessment systems. Nevertheless, they did not have any particular problem in understanding the assessment process and the tasks.

We experienced that explaining the system too in details before the training and the practical phase is not worth it since, usually, participants have difficulties in understanding the concept outside the context of the training or before experiencing a learning development. Therefore, a short presentation introducing the system and explaining what will happen at the end is sufficient. On the contrary, at the end of the learning activity, a more in deep explanation of the approach was considered interesting and meaningful by most participants. In particular, it helped them realising their learning development.

As a general remark, we found the pre-formatted sentences (to guide the formulation of summaries) very helpful. Also, the request of examples, instead of indicators, was much more understandable for the participants.

For sure it would be good for LEVEL5 service providers to have access to existing pre-formatted learning outcome grids and self-assessment questionnaires.

In relation to the results, we experienced a general advancement but it was not possible to predict the stages of such learning development and I believe that it is not possible to foresee the results when repeating the procedures with another group.

4. Transferability and perspectives

The reference system “client orientation in relation to clients with cognitive disorders” is now included in the system and could be used by other assessing personnel. The, one of the main results of the project is that the managers of the supermarket chain have already expressed their intention to buy the training package, including the LEVEL5 approach, to implement it in an extended and systematic way in all the supermarkets of the region they are in charge.

In general we will continue using such approach of pre-formatted learning outcomes, especially in cases of self-assessment and high number of learners. In fact, we believe that the approach can match a number of different projects and actions.

In particular, we are already adopting the same system in another European-funded project called Educckate (<http://educckate.eu/#!/home>). A high number of experienced entrepreneurs and students are going to evaluate themselves (through self-evaluation) on mentorship and entrepreneurship competences.

As already stated, using pre-formatted learning outcomes can bring positive improvements in relation to several aspects. However, it is of fundamental importance that the grid with the pre-formatted learning outcomes is of good quality and reflects the context of the learning activity.

5. Effects

The immediate effect of using LEVEL5 during the conclusive training session after the practical phase was to support the wrap-up process of the learning development. In fact, going through the questionnaire, and the self-assessment in general, helped the participants becoming more aware of what they had learnt.

Also, some of the participants used the LEVEL5 wording to shape and express their journey and results, in particular making reference to the three dimensions (cognitive, active and affective) and highlighting the importance of the affective one.

6. Good Practice example – lessons to learn or something in between

Tell a story about the use of LEVEL5 in your testing context, use a narrative form, include the perspective of a learner, a teacher and/or and another relevant stakeholder. Quote some of her, his or their (reflective) statements on the use and effects of using LEVEL5.

“I am extremely proud of this certificate” Donatella said when receiving it in front of her work-

place in the occasion of the project final conference in Italy. The two employers that we visited in a supermarket were wearing the project button and asked us to take pictures while the certificate was delivered to them.

Then, during the interview, both declared that the training changed the way they were thinking of and dealing with clients with cognitive disorders. They felt more confident of their capabilities and were able to address the issues in a more controlled way. Also, they both said that they were extremely proud of their LEVEL5 certificates: “I am going to frame it and put it on my counter!”, said one of them. While reading it carefully they nodded their heads. “Yes, I can see myself in here”, the descriptions truly reflected their learning development.

Future perspectives and other reflections

One suggestion to improve the experience is to use neutral learning outcomes, using for instance “the participant” or “the learner”, instead of changing every time the name of the participant in the descriptions. It is time consuming and errors are easy to occur. Also, in case of pure self-assessment, the system could offer just pre-formatted learning outcomes without the summary of the learning process and the summary of the evaluation. In general we will continue using such approach of pre-formatted learning outcomes, especially in cases of self-assessment and high number of learners. In fact, we believe that the approach can match a number of different projects and actions. In particular, we are already adopting the same system in another European-funded project called Educckate (<http://educckate.eu/#!/home>).

To sum up, the system was found to be extremely practicable and the outcomes widely accepted-

Vytautas Magnus University VMU – Lithuania

project name:

VITA/ BA students of Career Guidance going to practical work placement

project description:

BA students of Career Guidance as part of their formal undergraduate training go for a practical work placement to different organizations. It is planned to assess their *communication* competence before and after the placement.

Start date: February 4, 2013

End date: May15, 2013

Content localisation (country):

Vytautas Magnus university, Kaunas, Lithuania

Who are the participants of the programme/project?

Undergraduate students of Career Guidance

Descriptions of participants' profiles? (please refer to special characteristics/needs)

The undergraduate HE students in their 2nd year of studies (4 yrs in total). After graduation they will work as career counsellors in schools or hold any other administrative or non-formal training positions in education sector.

Why do the learners participate in your course/learning offer?

Practical work placement is a mandatory part of credit courses. However, formally students are graded for attendance, performance and final report of the placement.

Where does your project/programme take place (school, neighbourhood, club, home etc.)

Students have their practical work placement in schools.

Who initiated the project/activity?

The activity is initiated by Department of Education, Vytautas Magnus university.

Aims/Goals

What are the aims of the project/learning activity from your institution's point of view?

Undergraduate students in their formal higher education receive high amounts of theoretical knowledge. However, their future work contexts will require high levels of personal and social competences, especially communication. Therefore, there is much expected that during their practical work placement in real life and workplace situations their communication compe-

tence may be increased.

Project/Programme/learning activity. Which activities are carried out?

Students watch lessons in schools and later organize career guidance and other extra-curricular education activities for the secondary school students.

Who are the trainers/teachers/guides/helpers? What roles and responsibilities do they have?

Students have their practical work placement mentors, but their before/after development of social competence is estimated by department lecturers (participants of VITA project).

Duration of the learning offer: How many hours/days for the learning activities over which period of time?

170 hrs in one semester, usually 1 day a week.

What kind of methodology is used?

Practical application with monitored guidance.

What is the expected impact of your services offered on participants?

It is expected that students get acquainted with the practical functioning of a secondary education establishment, start practicing their career guidance skills and boost their communication competencies in real business environment.

Development of competencies

Which particular competence(s) do you assess in the project?

Social competence - communication

English version of reference system in annex

How is the LEVEL5 integrated in the learning activity? Is it added to an already planned activity/ taken in consideration during the planning? When and how are the LEVEL5 cube presented for the learners?

LEVEL5 was suggested to students as assessment system for the non-formal competences (*communication* competence in this case). Students were introduced to the cube system of levels in a general way and were invited to get their communication competence assessed before and after their placement in schools.

Assessment method(s)

Self-assessment

Experiences

The aim of the piloting was to test the applicability of LEVEL5 in HE. Social competence belongs to the key competences emphasized as crucial in social, personal and professional life in Europe. However, a personal competence like social competence is not assessed in formal system of HE. Social competence is usually primarily mentioned by employers, but university graduates usually have only indirect proofs of this competence, e.g, volunteering, participation in non-formal organizations, etc.

The aim of the piloting was to see how feasible it is to use and possibly to mainstream LEVEL5 in HE.

Piloting activities:

- Use of LEVEL5 in the development of social competence
 - The participants used to assess themselves individually in the class using adapted questionnaire forms;
 - Three or four months later, at the end of the practical work the participants assessed themselves again in the same setting
 - (forms from the same 10 participants were collected both times)
- Reflections on the use of LEVEL5
 - The questionnaire was combined with the discussions with the staff members engaged in LEVEL5.

1. Feasibility and usability

The perspective of the lecturer:

The lecturer (mentor) welcomed the idea of assessment of a personal competence (social competence) in this case. She was shortly introduced into the system of 5 levels and 3D cube. She appreciated the idea, but it was evident that application of the system requires additional training and experience, so in this case the mentor of the practical work placement has passed assessment role to the LEVEL5 team.

Using the system in partly self-assessment way combined with partial expert discussions and counseling is feasible in assessing non-formal achievement of social competences in practical work placement in HE.

The participants' perspective:

Participants' efforts were eased by the fact that a self-assessment questionnaire related to certain levels of each dimension was prepared for them. Their achievements were easily transferred into questions that were connected to respective levels. Therefore students embraced the self-assessment willingly and eager to receive assessment of their social competence. They found it mostly easy to answer the questions, but also need guidance and certain amount of counseling as well.

2. Efforts and acceptance

The piloting required effort, experience and knowledge. However, the bigger the input before meeting the target group (preparation of a questionnaire) the easier it is for the learners to comprehend the self-assessment and the level system.

A concise introduction of LEVEL5 system in 3 dimensions and 5 levels has taken about 30 min, self-assessment before the placement has taken 15-20 minutes and additional counseling in most cases. Assessment after the placement has taken the same amount. The longest time input was required for attribution of student answers to respective levels of the system and afterwards discussion with the participants in order to clarify the understanding and explain results.

3. Preconditions/Pre-knowledge of personnel

Staff held PhD in Education and training in LEVEL5 system.

4. Transferability and perspectives

The LEVEL5 for social competence may be transferred to other contexts in higher education, but certain work and time input is necessary in each case.

5. Effects

The immediate effect of using LEVEL5 was explained by the organizers who explained the system and the exercise. The further effect was felt for the students while self-assessment and the counseling has been a valuable self-awareness raising exercise in itself. In case of mainstreaming LEVEL5 system assessment of social competences for students could also be a valuable measure for quality assurance and self-evaluation process.

6. Good Practice example – lessons to learn or something in between

Tell a story about the use of LEVEL5 in your testing context, use a narrative form, include the perspective of a learner, a teacher and/or and another relevant stakeholder. Quote some of her, his or their (reflective) statements on the use and effects of using LEVEL5.

Using LEVEL5 for students to assess their social competence development during their practical work placement in HE studies has created a possibility to receive for the students something instantly feasible for the employers.

Future perspectives and other reflections

There are good perspectives, but further developments are necessary to be made in order to make the process less time consuming.

VIA University College – Denmark

project name:

Leading Inclusion

project description:

The learning activity was part of a local municipality's policy implementation of the policy of including children with special needs in kindergartens.

The inclusion policy is implemented partly by education of the pedagogical staff and leaders of kindergartens, partly by New Public Management measures, i.e. contracts and economic incentives. The educational part is directed toward pedagogical aspects of inclusion.

Start date 27th of February 2013

End date 21st of May 2013

Content localisation (country):

Municipality of Skanderborg, a provincial town in Denmark

Who are the participants of the programme/project?

Leaders of kindergartens

Descriptions of participants' profiles? (please refer to special characteristics/needs)

The kindergarten leaders typically hold a BA in pedagogy, many of them also a diploma in management and/or pedagogy.

Why do the learners participate in your course/learning offer?

The leaders were supposed to participate in the learning activity to improve their competencies as leaders of inclusion and in particular to support their newly trained staff.

Where does your project/programme take place (school, neighbourhood, club, home etc.)

The leaders met four afternoons at a local municipal school and did action learning in their own kindergartens.

Who initiated the project/activity?

The learning activity was initiated through a partnership between the Municipality of Skanderborg and VIA University College

Aims/Goals

What are the aims of the project/learning activity from your institution's point of view?

From the point of view of VIA University College, The aim of the learning activity is to enhance the participants' skills in their leading of inclusion

Project/Programme/learning activity. Which activities are carried out?

Lectures and facilitation of group work and of action learning

Who are the trainers/teachers/guides/helpers? What roles and responsibilities do they have?

The teacher is a consultant and lecturer at VIA University College, MA in Pedagogy

Duration of the learning offer: How many hours/days for the learning activities over which period of time?

4 afternoons (18 hours) over 3 months

What kind of methodology is used?

Action learning

What is the expected impact of your services offered on participants?

The expected impact of the learning activity together with other activities in the implementation programme is more competent and satisfactory inclusion of children with special needs

Development of competencies

Which particular competence(s) do you assess in the project?

Leading of inclusion

Substantiated/contextualized reference system is ENCLOSED

Yes

How is the LEVEL5 integrated in the learning activity? Is it added to an already planned activity/ taken in consideration during the planning? When and how are the LEVEL5 cube presented for the learners?

The lecturer formulated goals and indicators in LEVEL5 for 'Leading Inclusion', and used it as scaffold in her pedagogical planning of her part of the learning activity

She introduced the LEVEL5 for 'Leading Inclusion' in her class during the second session, and the participants assessed themselves in a setting in which they could talk with peers in their team of leaders. In the fourth and final session, the leaders assessed themselves again.

Assessment method(s)

Self-assessment

Experiences

Piloting strategy and methods

The aim of the piloting was to evaluate LEVEL5 in the development of competencies related to HE. The piloting focused on the *usability* of LEVEL5, the way the lecturer and the participants *made sense* of the method, and their conception of it as a *valid* method. The piloting consisted of 1) use of LEVEL5 and 2) reflective evaluation of the use of LEVEL5

A guiding principle for us in the piloting was that the activities should be an enriching experience for both the lecturer and the participants. In particular, we don't want to bother and possibly bore them with the evaluation part. We therefore chose to ask them to reflect on their experience with LEVEL5 and chose to use their reflections as data. Reflection is regarded as a giving, but often too rare activity in our target group. The disadvantage of this method is that the data we got are unstructured and the conclusions depend heavily on our interpretation. However, there are so many clear trends in the replies that we do not see this as a major issue.

Piloting activities

- Use of LEVEL5 in the development of competencies to lead inclusion
 - The lecturer formulated goals and indicators for 'Leading of Inclusion' in LEVEL5, hereafter presented the *cube* or the *forms*, as the participants named it.
 - The lecturer plans, teaches and facilitates learning with the cube as scaffold (4½ hour in an afternoon and related action-learning)
 - A lecturer from another department, experienced kindergarten leader reviewed the cube
 - The participants used the forms to assess themselves individually in the class, but in a setting allowing them to talk with peers in their team of leaders
 - Two months later, at the end of the course, after action-learning and another session of teaching the participants assessed themselves again in the same setting
 - (forms from the same 10 participants were collected both times)
- Reflections on the use of LEVEL5
 - Semi-structured interview with the lecturer
 - Thinking-aloud test with a second lecturer
 - The participants wrote their reflections and handed them in anonymously after each of the two assessment (35 the first time, 23 the second time)

1. Feasibility and usability

The perspective of the lecturer:

The lecturer immediately found the LEVEL5 approach interesting and relevant, she quickly comprehended the way LEVEL5 is constructed by the example of reflectivity competence, which made good sense for her. Her process of constructing a goals and indicators was also a process of making sense of it in the particular context she wanted to use it in, namely organizational perspectives on leading inclusion:

She decided to formulate a competence of 'Leading of Inclusion'.

This task initiated an intensive process of thinking about what "leading" is. She explained how she moved in circles between the three dimensions. The most interesting was the affective dimension. "It became a sounding board for the other two". At the same time the affective dimension is the least verbalized and explicated competence dimension in her teaching environment, she said. In the activity dimension she sees a parallel between good pedagogical practice and good leading. Here she mentions that she herself is not a leader, but teaches pedagogy. What she ended up with comes very close to the way she wished to be led. "It is really ideal," she said. In the cognitive dimension, she recognizes basic learning models, and she reflects on how it is related to situated learning. In her work on formulating the competence 'Leading of Inclusion' she thus alternates between theory of learning, her professional and academic knowledge, her own values and norms and what she wishes for herself.

She needed to decide from which perspective she regarded the competence, and she chose the perspective of the employees – newly trained in inclusion and in the midst of the difficult task with the children. But she also regarded her forms from the positions of the leaders. "If [as a leader], you have the courage to spar [on basis of the forms], you really put yourself at stake". In her approach, the validity of the goals and indicators she formulated is very much questions about her ability to communicate it in a way which can make sense for them so that they can relate to it. At the same time, however, she is well aware that she thinks in terms of inclusion pedagogy and the participants might think in terms of leading.

The participants' perspective:

During the second course session, the participants were presented for LEVEL5 for 'Leading Inclusion'. When they had evaluated themselves, they were asked to sit in silence and write down the reflections elicited by working with the schemas. And the same again the fourth and final course session.

On the first afternoon, many wrote, “It starts me thinking” and then they mentioned considerations on their leading and steps they wanted to take. Some expressed considerations specifically on leading inclusion, and among them, some also wrote about their uncertainties concerning leading inclusion. Others addressed the forms as a self-assessment tool. In different ways, some of them said that “consciousness of the levels is useful”. But others draw attention to the contingency of the assessments. It depends on the situation and on which level you are at. A handful of the participants are critical: They express that the assessments should be made in dialog with them, i.e. not as self-assessment in the class. Two desisted from the use of the forms. You cannot measure competences this way, they said.

When we reached the fourth session, there had been some rotation of the participants. Hence, some mentioned that it was the first time they saw the forms. They were fewer, and fewer of them handed in their reflections (23 the second time compared to 35 the first time).

Several of the participants related their reflections to “how far I myself am now”, as one stated it. They used metaphors like “I have moved forward” in their descriptions. And “It is good to ensure that one keeps on one’s toes,” one participant wrote. In other words, they identify with the goals and concept of LEVEL5.

Some discussed the usefulness of the forms in a leader-team: “You need openness,” one writes. Another said that the forms helped them to talk about the process in a good way. The general attitude to the forms was positive. But one wrote that “reality is more complex and subtle.” Another said that “there are too many words in the forms”. A couple restated the criticism of using the forms in the class. But regardless of their attitude, they expressed that they found it good to reflect on their leading.

In the setting, the participants *understood* the forms. There was only one indication of difficulties, “too many words” as mentioned above. The forms seemed *to make sense* to the participants, and they got something out of their reflections when they read the forms and assessed themselves. Most related themselves to the forms, but there was some skepticism regarding the possibility of mapping competencies in the form. The leading of inclusion described in the forms was not questioned by the participants. Two things came into play here. The teaching of the subject was aligned with the description as the lecturer explained it, see above; and it was presumably a new field for most of the participants, so they were not in a position to question it.

2. Efforts and acceptance

The efforts spent seems to be acceptable to most

The Lecturer explained that she thought about the competences and indicators for 'Leading Inclusion' for some days and then formulated the form within one and a half hours, which she found quite acceptable.

The participants spent about 10-15 minutes to read the competences and indicators and evaluate themselves. A majority finished their evaluation within 10 minutes. But some of the participants wrote that it would be better to work with the form, the LEVEL5 for 'Leading Inclusion' alone, in depth and to have more time. A couple stated it was a waste of time to do the self-evaluation in the class. Presumably the class-room context influences both the time spent and the participants' view on it.

Our interpretation of the participants' written reflections is that most of them found it relevant and valuable.

3. Preconditions/Pre-knowledge of personnel

The lecturer, MA in Pedagogy, is educated in systematic evaluation, which might give her special preconditions compared to most of her colleagues. The participants typically hold a BA in Pedagogy and some kind of diploma of continuous education and might – as leaders in the public sector – regard leading of inclusion as a challenge they must meet, and education including self-assessment is part of it, and it might be a welcomed part.

4. Transferability and perspectives

The LEVEL5 for 'Leading Inclusion' will be adopted by the lecturer's.

Schematic methods are more and more adopted in the field of pedagogy and schematic management methods are reintroduced in leading, so I expect that there might be an interest for LEVEL5 in the general area as well as at VIA University College. On the other hand, a sceptical attitude toward it – similar to the attitude expressed by one of the participants – also exists.

5. Effects

The immediate effect of using LEVEL5 was explained by the lecturer who formulated the goals and indicators for 'Leading Inclusion': It directly influenced her pedagogical planning as she used these goals as targets.

The participants' reflections indicate that some of them seem to shape their understanding of

the way they lead their employees' work with inclusion by the wording in LEVEL5. Furthermore, some of the participating leaders said that they have used LEVEL5 for 'Leading Inclusion' in their team of leaders as a way of guiding their reflections.

Thus it is most likely that it has some impact on the way inclusion is led and on the understanding of the leading of inclusion in the kindergartens of the municipality. But our data does not allow us to trace the impact further, and the matter will certainly be diffused by the influence of many other activities.

6. Good Practice example – lessons to learn or something in between

"This sets off a whole lot of thoughts about what leading inclusion is," says the lecturer who substantiated LEVEL5 for inclusion management. She and her teaching team had embraced LEVEL5 when they were introduced to it as one way of strengthening the action learning program they were about to plan. The action learning program was aimed at managers at day care centers who had to start to include handicapped children in day care centers. As a new practice, it was of course a challenge to the staff at centers. The lecturer formulated the aims as well as signs of the achievement of key competences for the managers in their new situation, i.e. Inclusion management. "It was the affective dimension which appealed to me most," she says. "The affective dimension is usually overlooked, but it provides a new angle on the cognitive and activity related aspects of the competence," she explains.

A competence cannot be described out of the blue. It is necessary to choose the perspective from which the competence is seen. The lecturer here chose the perspective of the pedagogical staff, i.e. she focuses on the management they will need when they are to embark on the new task of including handicapped children in the daily life and routines at the daycare centers. The managers who are part of the action learning program recognize themselves in the lecturer's descriptions of the levels of competent inclusion management, and they explained how it gets them thinking about their own managing inclusion. It probably plays a significant role that the lecturer herself has a past as pedagogical staff at a day care center, and that she used LEVEL5 as a scaffold when she planned the teaching program. Almost all of the 36 participants welcomed LEVEL5, and some even point to how it might be a good tool for reflection in their group of managers. However, some question whether competences can be described and measured in a valid fashion in this way. Still, all in all, the picture is that LEVEL5 was well received by the teaching staff involved in continuous professional development at VIA University College as well as in the professional environment.

Middle East Technical University (METU) – Turkey

project name:

CLIMES: Climate Friendly School Management System

project description:

The learning activity was initiated as part of an EU Project in 2012, and it involved high school students calculating the carbon footprint of the school and developing strategies to reduce carbon emission. Students who took part in this activity were part of the school club called GREEN, and were guided by two science teachers in their CLIMES related activities. The school administration supported this initiative and made some changes in school to reduce carbon emission.

Start date 15 September 2012

End date 15 June 2014

Content localisation (country):

Ankara, the capital city of Turkey

Who are the participants of the programme/project?

High school students (N=8)

Descriptions of participants' profiles? (please refer to special characteristics/needs)

Students are 11th and 12th graders. They are volunteers in Club GREEN. Seven are females and one male. They mostly come from above average income families with university education. Academically these students are well established, and they are in the process of preparing a high stakes test called university entrance exam.

Why do the learners participate in your course/learning offer?

Participation is voluntary. Their performance in this activity has no direct impact on their grades in formal courses, but they find these activities meaningful in connecting what they learn in formal courses to daily life problems. They also like working as a team and having some learning experience to offer to their peers as valuable. This activity is also an opportunity for them to work with their teachers closely and to have the collaborative experience as a source of pride

Where does your project/programme take place (school, neighbourhood, club, home etc.)

The project takes place at school (METU Foundation School) in Club GREEN room.

Who initiated the project/activity?

The learning activity was initiated by Department of Educational Sciences of METU as part of a European Project called CLIMES. Two professors of the department approached the school administration with the project idea and were welcomed by the school to carry it out. Then the Club GREEN teachers took the responsibility of implementing it with students in the Club. A research assistant from the Educational Sciences Department assisted students in developing strategies and activities in line with the project goals.

Aims/Goals : What are the aims of the project/learning activity from your institution's point of view?

The purpose of the learning activity was to calculate the carbon footprint of the school and develop strategies to reduce it. At the same time, the project aimed to raise awareness among other students in school toward climate change and ways to mitigate it.

Project/Programme/learning activity. Which activities are carried out?

Carbon footprint calculation, developing strategies to reduce carbon footprint, developing activities and presentations to raise awareness among students toward climate change and ways to mitigate it.

Who are the trainers/teachers/guides/helpers? What roles and responsibilities do they have?

The teachers are Biology teachers. They teach courses at the high school level as well as run the Club GREEN as an extracurricular activity for students. The research assistant is from Department of Educational Sciences at METU, and she had the responsibility to assist students in developing strategies to reduce carbon emission of school and as well as activities to increase knowledge and awareness of students in relation to climate change and its effects on the world. The two professors from the same department also assisted the teachers and students in relation to project implementation by arranging seminars on climate change.

Duration of the learning offer: How many hours/days for the learning activities over which period of time?

2 hours on Thursdays for two years regularly, but also miscellaneous other times for seminars and presentations

What kind of methodology is used?

Collaborative learning, action learning, problem solving

What is the expected impact of your services offered on participants?

Increased understanding of carbon emission and ways to control it, increased awareness of climate change and its impact at local and global levels, satisfaction in learning and acting together, problem solving ability

Development of competencies: *Which particular competence(s) do you assess in the project?*

Team learning and problem solving

Substantiated/contextualized reference system is ENCLOSED

Yes

How is the LEVEL5 integrated in the learning activity? Is it added to an already planned activity/ taken in consideration during the planning? When and how are the LEVEL5 cube presented for the learners?

LEVEL5 was integrated in the learning activity toward the end of the activity as a way of assessing the informal learning outcomes of the students who participated in the project. The LEVEL5 cube was presented to one of the Club teachers in 2012 in Gottingen as part of LEVEL5 workshop, and this teacher shared her experience with the other teacher and the students. Students were informed in the Spring of 2013 that they would be assessed in terms of progress they made in relation to team building and problem solving competencies. In line with this goal students were asked to reflect their own perspectives in relation to the entry and exit behaviours within the project.

Assessment method(s)

Self-assessment, teacher assessment, interviews and observations.

Experiences

LEVEL5 was integrated in the learning activity through following activities:

- Student competencies (team learning and problem solving) to be assessed as part of the learning activity were determined in consultation with the teachers.
- The competencies were contextualized in line with the project goals and activities.
- The teachers were asked to fill out the LEVEL5 assessment tools for each participant student (a total of 8 students) in relation to two competencies by taking into consideration students` own views of progress they made as well.
- The assessment was complemented by the project implementers (two professors and a research assistant) through the data collected through interviews with students and teachers, and observation reports of project activities.
- Assessment for each dimension in LEVEL5 was done for each student to summarize the development for each competency.

The following experiences can be reported as result of piloting LEVEL5 within the context of CLIMES at METU Foundation School:

- Piloting has shown that LEVEL5 could be a useful approach to assess informal learning outcomes that are not measured through traditional assessment methods.
- The competencies selected for assessment (team learning and problem solving) were selected appropriately since both were the core skills developed as a result of the learning activity.
- The contextualization of the competencies appears to be important in relating the common descriptors to the ones that are relevant to the context of learning activity.
- Teachers did not have much difficulty in using the LEVEL5 system in assessing students' competencies since one of them already had participated in LEVEL5 training in Gottingen, and they were assisted by the VITA Project partners in Turkey.
- Multiple methods of data collections appear to be critical in assessing students' developed competencies in a more reliable and valid way since self-perceptions or individual teacher perceptions could be subjective to certain degree and that might create a validity threat to the assessments. However, when these assessments are corroborated by other data sources such as interviews and observations, the assessment then can be more valid.

1. Feasibility and usability

Teachers' and project implementers' perspectives:

The teachers found the LEVEL5 approach useful and relevant. Since one of them had participated in LEVEL5 workshop in Gottingen, she had a good idea of what LEVEL5 was and in what ways it should be used. Teachers looked at different examples of LEVEL5 competencies and how these competencies were assessed in different learning activity contexts. Teachers thought that many competencies would be relevant to CLIMES Project implementation such as team building, problem solving, communication, leadership, research, etc.

Finally, team building and problem solving were chosen for piloting. These competencies were contextualized together with teachers to relate them more closely to Project CLIMES goals. Teachers found the contextualized descriptions relevant and shared them with students. Students did not question the descriptions but they thought both competencies and the levels in three dimensions (cognitive, affective and activity) would be relevant to the experiences they went through in the project.

There was concern with the LEVEL5 tool in the minds of teachers. To what degree would they be to the point in assessing students in relation to these two competencies? They were instructed that they could use their own observations and their informal interviews with the

students. In fact the two teachers found it useful to discuss their assessments of each student to make sure that they are not subjective and not missing relevant sources of data. Teachers were also assured that the interviews and observations carried out by the project research assistant could also be used to corroborate their assessment. With this direction, teachers felt more comfortable in assessing students along the LEVEL5 cube.

2. Efforts and acceptance

Teachers thought that filling out the LEVEL5 forms for each student takes time but it is worth to spend this time since it is descriptive and shows improvement. So the time and effort they spent seem to be worthwhile to both.

Teachers spent about 1 hour to read the competencies and indicators to make sense of the approach as a whole. They then spent around 20 minutes for each student to fill out the form. Teachers also shared their evaluations with students and received their opinions on them. Based on these discussions teachers did some revisions in their assessment of the students. Students seem to like the idea of assessing themselves on these competencies since that was the first time they were being assessed descriptively in terms of their informal learning outcomes. Overall, we find that LEVEL5 has been perceived as a useful tool to do self and student assessment in extracurricular activities.

3. Preconditions/Pre-knowledge of personnel

LEVEL5 requires a good deal of learning and practice. In our case, one of the teachers participated in a workshop on LEVEL5 and that made the transition from the concept of assessment to actual practice of assessment went smoothly. In addition the good communication among the partner teachers leading the learning activity was essential in sharing experiences and collaborating on the tasks to be accomplished. So we suggest that an introduction seminar on LEVEL5 for the teachers would be essential.

4. Transferability and perspectives

The competencies selected for this learning activity (team building and problem solving) will be used to assess participants in other similar extracurricular activities. In fact two additional schools showed interest in using LEVEL5 approach in their extracurricular activities and the descriptions were sent to them in Turkish. One school immediately started using these competencies within the context of various club activities in school. So this approach could prove effective in the long run in documenting the progress students make in extracurricular activities in many schools since they seem to spend much time and effort in these activities yet do not have a systematic approach to assess and document the learning outcomes students achieve.

5. Effects

One of the effects of using LEVEL5 in Project CLIMES was that students were motivated to take part in similar projects once they learned that they would have a certificate/e-portfolio to document their achievement in this activity. In this sense LEVEL5 can be a motivating factor for other students who think of joining in similar learning activities.

Another effect on students is that LEVEL5 provided them with a way of thinking about the progress they made in relation to team building and problem solving competencies. Conceptualization of their competencies could be helpful in sharing their achievements with significant others such as parents, teachers, future employers, etc.

One effect for the teachers was that they have systematic way of thinking in relation to areas they need to focus on in future learning activities since LEVEL5 helped them see each competence could have different dimensions and each dimension with different level of achievement. Both team building and problem solving competencies are not simply one entity not but a competence with different dimensions and levels. This way of thinking makes it easier for them to plan activities in Clubs for students to make better progress in relation to these competencies. Another effect on teachers is that they have a way of showing to school administrators and parents what they achieve for each student in these extracurricular activities.

6. Good Practice example – lessons to learn or something in between

Tell a story about the use of LEVEL5 in your testing context, use a narrative form, include the perspective of a learner, a teacher and/or and another relevant stakeholder. Quote some of her, his or their (reflective) statements on the use and effects of using LEVEL5.

In determining the competencies, we had difficult time to choose. There seemed to be too many competencies relevant to the implementation of Project CLIMES in METU School. The two project coordinators thought of different competencies and they discussed these with teachers. Among these were team building, problem solving, communication, leadership, flexibility, learning to learn, conflict management, interpersonal skills, research, global thinking, etc. The number of these competencies and the difficulty we had in choosing the most relevant ones showed that how much we ignored in the past the informal learning outcomes these activities produced and how they went by without sufficient recognition. Then we said an approach like LEVEL5 is certainly necessary to assess and document these learning outcomes since they could as important as (maybe more) content related outcomes.

We seem to share this perspective with teachers as well as the two schools that showed interest as soon as they saw the news in the national media in relation to Project VITA. There is a need certainly to establish a system of assessing and certifying these informal learning outcomes in schools.

Future perspectives and other reflections

Assessment of informal outcomes has been much needed action in education of students in schools at all levels. This piloting has shown that the assessment could contribute to validation of these outcomes as well as serve as reflection for students themselves and their teachers. Other schools are also interested in using this system to validate and certify skill development in students through extracurricular activities the schools organize and welcome as part of their overall goal of education.

5.3 Annex 3: Contextualised reference systems as used for the pilots