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“Times of transition – the role of university lifelong learning”

CO-WORKER EXCHANGE AMONG MEDICAL FACULTY FOR NOVEL UNIVERSITY LEARNING AND TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

A university is a place that generates new ideas and also covers the entire universe of knowledge. For higher education numerous learning and teaching strategies are available and provide effective learning and teaching outcomes. Interaction between teachers and education managers is crucial in understanding how universities develop new and innovative pedagogy. In order to change their work environments, teachers must be innovative and open to applying new ideas and opportunities.

In this paper, we suggest that university teachers can be innovative by sharing their insights and knowledge on teaching with their colleagues and peers. Pedagogical development is theorized here based on the concepts of Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB), co-worker exchange (CWX) and leader-member exchange (CMX). IWB can be defined as the intentional generation, promotion and realization of new ideas within a work role, workgroup or organization. IWB consists of opportunity exploration, idea generation, championing and application. Co-worker exchange refers to the quality of relationships between teachers in university. The leader member exchange (LMX) theory suggests that superiors distribute their resources unequally to their subordinates, hence leading to some group members being more powerful in the work group. As a trickle-down effect, some members have more control over the task accomplishment than others. Hence, co-worker exchange is affected also by the quality of interaction between leaders and members of the group.

In this study we explore how Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB) and co-worker exchange (CWX) are practiced in two university medical faculties in Albania and Finland. We suggest that high levels of Innovative Work Behaviour and Co-worker exchange lead to improved teaching practices. We aim to discover and describe best practices among four teams at faculty or department level in two universities.

The teams will be selected by purposive sampling, aiming for maximum variation where possible. They are known for their interest in and openness to pedagogical development. The selected samples represent two presumably different cultural traditions. Albania and Finland differ greatly in the Hofstede's six dimensions of national culture (Hofstede Insights 2018). They can be seen as the two extremes of the aforementioned six-dimensional model of European national cultures. The diverse cultural contexts provide us with the possibility to study whether cooperative communication between group members and between leaders and members of the

group differ in the two countries. This study will inform the academic community as to how pedagogical development in medical faculty teaching and learning is affected by co-worker exchange and innovative work behaviour. The national differences make the results applicable for a wider range of cultures and contexts.

Keywords: medical faculty teaching, co-worker exchange, leader-member exchange, innovative work behaviour, pedagogical development

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is sometimes referred to as solitary work, that is, without much collaboration between the peers. In university, teachers are supposed to share the knowledge of their own research with their students. However, the contemporary discourses call for a number of qualities to be taken into account in learning and teaching in higher education: employability, working life relevance, mobility, to name but a few. Hence, the teacher's profession in university takes place in a context where interaction with peers is valued not only for teaching, but also for developing the curricula to meet the needs of the surrounding society.

Research on communication suggest that an employee's job attitudes and task behaviours are socially constructed. Significant others in the workplace provide individual's normative and informational cues, and these are then used as tools to form communication strategies, as well as alliances, partnerships, and joint ventures such as research consortia (Lee 1997: 268). Some of these behaviours are beneficial to developing teaching methods and renewing the curricula. In practice, this includes behaviours such as helping a co-worker, offering constructive suggestions or other forms of collegial support.

In this paper we suggest that university teachers develop their pedagogy and renew the curricula through the process of innovative work behaviour (IWB). As novel ideas need acceptance and support, teachers engage in communication with their peers and leaders to take their ideas into practice. As elaborated in the theoretical framework, this social interaction is mediated and moderated through the factors identified in the theories of co-worker exchange (CWX) and leader-member exchange (LMX).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In management studies, co-worker exchange (CWX) and leader-member exchange (LMX) theories explore the relationships that exist between the leader and those led, and in this case, those between university teachers and their supervisors. In education, recent studies have also tackled the correlation between teacher innovative behaviour, open and closed leadership behaviours and supervisor empowering leadership (e.g. Geijsel *et. al.*, 2001; Chen *et. al.* 2011; Gkorezis, 2015). This happens always in a cultural context.

Analytical interest has been cast not only on the objective aspects - innovations - but also to the the processes and the social interaction of those involved in the innovation processes. Much of

this research is statistical, which is the reason why a qualitative approach was selected here to explore social interaction in idea championing. Teacher innovative work behaviour is of academic interest due to the fact that education institutions contribute to the innovation system by educating new professionals to the labour market. Universities have a provision of a role model for the society at large, as they produce new knowledge and technologies (Thurlings et. al., 2014). However, universities are not known for their ability to keep up with the fast changing society.

Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB)

Rooting their analysis to research by Farr and Ford (1990) and Kanter (1988), de Jong and den Hartog (2010) divide innovative work behaviour (IWB) into four dimensions: idea exploration, idea generation, idea championing and idea implementation.

Firstly, *idea exploration* means looking for new ways to improve current products, services or processes. This may also include trying to think of them in new ways. Secondly, *idea generation* refers to thinking of new products, services or processes, such as entry to new markets (de Jong & den Hartog, 2010).

Idea championing comes into the picture when an idea has been generated. As it is uncertain whether new ideas will prove to be profitable, employees need to seek support and legitimation from others. Ideas need to be promoted even if they have legitimacy or it is evident that they fill a performance gap. Idea championing includes behaviours such as finding support and building coalitions, expressing enthusiasm and confidence, being persistent, and involving the right people in the organization. Idea champions are persons in informal roles, “who push creative ideas beyond roadblocks in their organizations”, and help in realization of the novel idea (Shane, 1994; de Jong & den Hartog, 2010).

As the fourth and last dimension comes the part of *idea implementation*. It includes making innovations part of regular work processes, developing new products or work processes, and testing and modifying them (de Jong & den Hartog, 2010).

Idea championing as negotiation of power between peers and leaders

As co-worker exchange refers to the quality of relationships between teachers in university, the concept of leader-member exchange (LMX) is used to explore how different kinds of leadership behaviours affect the cooperative communication between teachers. As noted by Lee (1997), research on LMX suggests that the subordinate’s perception of exchange quality with their leaders influence their communication with peers. This may include e.g. adopting different persuasive strategies or by using different types of conversational resources. Group members may extend the use of communication patterns adopted with their leaders also to their interaction with peers.

From the leaders’ perspective, the process of innovative work behavior is divided into two parts, *exploration* and *exploitation* behaviours. According to Spreitzer et. al. (2005), exploration “refers

to individuals' attempts to reach out for novel ways of working through experimentation, flexibility, discovery and risk taking". Exploitation, on the other hand, refers to goal achievement, effectiveness, and avoiding risks and errors (Zacher *et. al.*, 2014). One role of supervisors in this process, amongst many others, is to support both the creation of ideas (exploration) and taking them into practice (exploitation). Idea championing is part of idea exploitation, and is mediated and monitored by peers and leaders, by either giving or declining support to the suggested novel ideas.

To understand the process of support to championing, the ambidextrous leadership theory (e.g. Benner & Tushman, 2003; He & Wong, 2004; Zacher *et. al.* 2014) explains the contradictory or paradoxical role supervisors have to take in the innovation process. By ambidexterity the research refers to the ability to "use both hands equally well"; that is, supporting risk taking in the phase of seeking novel ideas and reducing risk taking in the application phase by putting emphasis on taking the existing ideas into practice. By doing so, supervisors' *open leadership behaviours* supposedly create new capabilities for the organization, and at the same time, *closed leadership behaviours* aim at exploiting their existing competencies (Zacher *et. al.*, 2014). As described by the concept of ambidextrous leadership (Rosing, Frese and Bausch, 2011), open and closed leadership behaviours are assumed to foster high levels of employee exploration and exploitation behaviours (He & Wong, 2004, Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008).

Open and closed leadership behaviours can also be seen as part of empowering leadership, (see e.g. Vecchio *et. al.*, 2010; Chen *et. al.*, 2011; Gkorezis, 2016), a form of leadership which delineates behaviours that share power with subordinates. Leaders with high empowering leadership behaviours delegate authority, involve employees in decision making and embolden self-management. Leaders with low empowering leadership behaviours limit employee autonomy, discourage their self-management and express low levels of faith in their capabilities (Chen *et. al.*, 2011; Gkorezis, 2016).

Six dimensional model of national culture

In our study, one interesting context for the pedagogical development is the national culture, since we study work teams in two completely dissimilar cultures. Geert Hofstede used six dimensions to describe how the national cultures differ (Hofstede, 2003: xix; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2010: 45, 280). Over the years, his work has extended into an online country comparison tool in which over 76 national cultures can be examined (Hofstede Insights, 2018).

The first dimension is power distance, which refers to the extent to which the unequal power distribution is tolerated (Hofstede, 2003: xix). The two cultures in our study are distinct from each other as Albanians tolerate unequal distribution of power and Finns do not (Hofstede Insights, 2018). Individualism vs. collectivism, the second dimension, is a continuum between individuals taking care of themselves and individuals remaining integrated in groups (Hofstede, 2003: xix). Here the two cultures are complete opposites. Finns are individualistic and Albanians communal (Hofstede Insights, 2018). The third dimension, masculinity vs. femininity, refers to the roles which the genders take between clearly distinct emotional gender roles and

overlapping emotional gender roles (Hofstede & Hofstede 2010: 140). The Albanian culture is clearly masculine and the Finnish culture, on the other hand, clearly feminine (Hofstede Insights, 2018). The fourth dimension is uncertainty avoidance, which refers to the extent to which members of a culture are wired to feel comfortable or uncomfortable in uncertain situations (Hofstede, 2003: xix). Only here are our two cultures similar. Both cultures prefer avoiding uncertainty (Hofstede Insights, 2018). The fifth dimension, long term vs. short term normative orientation, refers to how national culture maintains some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and future. This dimension also shows clear relative difference between our two countries. The Albanian culture adapts traditions to changed conditions and shows perseverance in achieving results. The Finnish culture, on the contrary, values traditions and seeks quick rewards (Hofstede Insights, 2018). The sixth dimension, indulgence vs. restraint, refers to a continuum between a tendency to allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires and a conviction that such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict social norms (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2010: 281). Albanian culture is one of restraint and Finland is an indulgent country (Hofstede Insights, 2018). Again the two cultures clearly differ from each other.

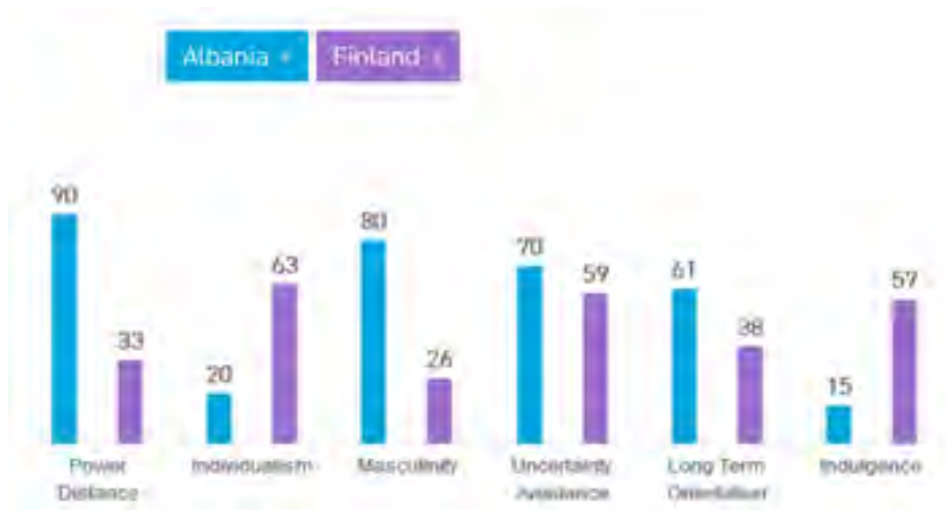


Figure 1. Scores of Albania and Finland on the six dimensions of national culture (Hofstede Insights, 2018).

METHODOLOGY

Research question

This study aims to identify what factors university teachers bring up in championing and co-worker exchange on pedagogical development of curricula reform in medical faculty teaching and learning. The samples may bring knowledge on the topic in the field of academic medicine, but further study will be needed in order to find out if similar factors are to be identified in other disciplines as well.

Study design

This is a qualitative case-study using purposive sampling. The data will be collected via semi-structured interviews from two teams in university faculties in Albania and Finland. According to Jamshed (2014), semi-structured interviews are in-depth interviews where respondents have to answer pre-set open-ended questions. The interviewer uses a schematic presentation of questions or topics to guide the informants through the interview in order to accomplish a desired line of action. Group interviews are used here to explore the views of many respondents simultaneously and to facilitate a flow of meaning-making among the informants.

Study setting

The study will be conducted on academic staff in the Faculty of Medicine in the University of Turku in Finland, and in the Faculty of Public Health in the University of Vlora in Albania. The teams will be selected by purposive sampling, aiming for maximum variation where possible.

Study population

The study population will consist of professors working in the aforementioned Universities in Albania and in Finland. Purposive sampling will be used, aiming for maximum variation where possible.

Measurement instrument

Based on the literature, an interview structure with open-ended questions was developed by the researchers. Idea championing is explored by combining supervisor-rated and self-reported questions on the innovative work behaviour survey presented by de Jong and den Hartog (2010) as follows:

In your job, how often do you . . .

- . . . make suggestions to improve current teaching and pedagogy (original: products or services)?
- . . . produce ideas to improve work practices, such as teaching methods and the curricula (original: work practices)?
- . . . acquire new knowledge?
- . . . actively contribute to the development of new teaching methods and curricula (original: products or services)?
- . . . acquire new groups of customers? (item dropped from questionnaire)
- . . . optimize the organization of work?

In your job, how do you . . .

- . . . try to make important organizational members enthusiastic for innovative ideas?
- . . . attempt to convince people to support an innovative idea?

Does your executive . . .

- . . . ask for your opinion.
- . . . ask you to suggest how to carry out assignments.
- . . . consult you regarding important changes.
- . . . let you influence decisions about long-term plans and directions.

- . . . allow you to set your own goals.
- . . . give you considerable opportunities for independence and freedom.

What do you think should change in order to improve co-workers exchange?

Data collection

In each country two focus groups will be held. Group interviews will consist of 3 members in each team, resulting in a total number of 12 informants. The discussion will be recorded while notes will be taken.

Data analysis

The phases of analysis will include coding, followed by the identification and clustering of themes and sub-themes and the production of a descriptive thematic summary. Pairs of (local) researchers code the responses and after that the two different teams will compare their analyses for inconsistencies and agreement. Finally, the themes and sub-themes will be grouped to construct a more interpretative narrative across the dataset.

Limitations of study

This study uses self-reported innovative performance, which has its limitations. According to Reiter-Palmon *et. al.* (2012), self-perceptions of creativity reflect a motivational construct instead of more objective measures of innovative performance.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Prior research on ambidextrous leadership and innovative work behaviour in learning organisations suggests that there may be practical implications on leader selection, training and development (e.g. Zacher *et. al.*, 2014; Gkorezis, 2016). For example, Zacher *et. al.* (2014) argue that organisations could select leaders who are able to use specific open and closing leadership behaviours to foster employee idea exploration and exploitation for innovations.

Research on innovative work behaviour and co-worker exchange may benefit pedagogical development in universities by identifying what factors support and hinder teacher collaboration, and what kind of leadership behaviours support the pedagogical development and renewal of curricula. Despite the limitations of the study, it may have implications also for pedagogical training in universities, by bringing new information on how organisational culture affects the cooperative communication at the faculty level.

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PROCESS DEVELOPMENT FOR ENHANCED DEMONSTRATION OF COMPETENCES: RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AS A MUTUAL INTEREST OF STAKEHOLDERS AT HAAGA-HELIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

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INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions meet challenges emerging from a variety of perspectives: expectations to train skilled specialists for working life; societal and demographic mutations especially in ageing Europe; financial constraints; fluctuations in motivation towards long-term and goal-oriented studies among younger generations; as well as competition between institutions themselves. Life-long learning is an objective embraced by governments and working life; however, the investments that higher education institutions make to enable professional transitions are not always compatible with their visions and missions. It is a complex task to implement a study process that enables lifelong learning and full recognition of prior learning without compromising quality and while maintaining balance between the academic and professional vocations of higher education.

One of the key factors in responding to the above-mentioned challenges is to design and implement competence-based curricula that are built upon the competence requirements stemming from contemporary professional profiles in various sectors. Moreover, the curricula need to be enhanced by structural refurbishment that aligns to them, which is challenging since processes in higher education institutions tend to be somewhat stable and they are always subject to both national legislation and academic traditions. However, higher education providers need to embrace constant process development in order to fulfil the expectations of stakeholders both in academia and in the surrounding society.

With more than 10,000 students, Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences is the second largest University of Applied Sciences in Finland. Various stakeholders have an essential role in our educational processes: boards of experts from fields related to each academic unit comment on curriculum development and pedagogical initiatives, students' associations cooperate with lecturers and administration in daily work and the large body of Haaga-Helia alumni includes professionals who are keen on contributing to the development of degree programmes. The input from the alumni is valuable in terms of internship opportunities offered for current students, real-life projects integrated into courses and commissioned theses. Furthermore, our alumni can contribute to assessment of learning in the framework of work-based learning.

This practically oriented paper unfolds the process of validation of work-based learning at Haaga-Helia UAS, as a crucial part of the global context of recognition of prior and ongoing learning at the institution. Abiding with the Nordic Model of validation (Road Map, 2018), the notion of "validation" is applied here as an umbrella term, where recognition and accreditation are embedded. Work & Study (W&S) is a pedagogical initiative developed as a complementary option to UAS studies in order to obtain the full benefit of working alongside undertaking higher education studies. The Work & Study process is presented to highlight the value that higher education institutions gain from intensive cooperation with all stakeholders in the context of recognition of learning. The question of enhancing lifelong learning with a professionally and academically relevant approach is at present a prerequisite for all competitive higher education.

W&S is an essential component of validation of non-formal and informal learning at Haaga-Helia and a key facilitator of professional transitions. It is a process reflecting the ideal of lifelong learning and the vision of the institution as opening doors to future careers, whilst maintaining an ongoing dialogue with various stakeholders within and outside the institution (Mäkelä & Moisio, 2017).

PROFESSIONAL TRANSITIONS AND HIGHER EDUCATION STUDIES

In Finland, a student attending a University of Applied Sciences works on average 18 hours and studies during 34 hours per week. More than 50% of students are employed in the field of their studies, which is a higher percentage than in other EU countries (Hauschildt *et al.*, 2015). An important part of the student body completes part-time degree studies while working full-time, and seeks new career opportunities whilst accumulating experience and enhancing their competences. These competences are both generic and field-specific. Career opportunities may be positioned either in the current field of work, where the student is aiming at promotion and new challenges in the present organization, or they may target novel professional fields and possibly a new job.

Regardless of the nature of individual career aspirations, students desire to get their capital of competences validated, hence higher education institutions face an increasing demand for up-to-date and transparent processes of recognizing prior informal and non-formal learning, of which a major part occurs at work. This applies to most countries (Helyer, 2016). An endeavor of this kind necessitates carefully designed support from institutional processes throughout the study cycle: curriculum design, guidance and counselling activities, delivery of study modules, as well as career and recruitment services which need to be implemented in accordance with the fundamental pedagogical vision. Since the mission of Finnish UAS institutions is to combine higher education with a solid professional foundation, integration of work with UAS studies and the opportunity to validate learning occurring at workplace is an indispensable factor of success. To succeed in this mission, one needs to provide continuous training for lecturers, academic advisors and placement coordinators, and maintain constant dialogue with the counterparts outside the institution. Transitions are facilitated and information flows functionally when the stakeholders know each other and the goal of enhanced employability is shared. In all, functional validation processes of work-based learning can be defined as a bridge between the workplace and the higher education provider (Armsby & Helyer, 2016).

The professional transitions of Finnish higher education students are fluctuating and dynamic, reflecting multiple opportunities to combine work and higher education studies. This applies to both full-time and part-time students in the context of Universities of Applied Sciences which fulfil a vocation to cater for the needs of qualified professionals in various fields. This feature distinguishes UAS institutions from research-oriented universities, and establishes an imperative to nurture active relations with related industries.

The concept of Work & Study encapsulates the entire process of integrating work and degree studies at Haaga-Helia: information from pre-entry level to graduation phase, process management, validation of work experience, documentation, training of practitioners, counselling and guidance, cooperation with stakeholders (companies, organisations, Haaga-Helia Start Up School and alumni) and quality assurance. Moreover, dimensions of self-reflection and of company feedback are built into the process. At present, it is being developed from an initiative into a fundamental pedagogical principle, overarching the entire learning process of students and working styles of staff members.

This holistic model challenges the pedagogical mindset where lecturers deliver and assess something that students absorb, without the participation of outside actors or contexts.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS OF THE WORK & STUDY INITIATIVE

Experience from cross-sectional cooperation and innovation have led to a model of tri-dimensional validation practice at Haaga-Helia UAS: demonstration of competences stemming from informal and non-formal learning as well as work-based learning is applied, in addition to accreditation of transfer credits from prior higher education studies. All are built into a continuum where students have various options in constructing their study paths and for having their competences validated (Fig.1). The institution provides this framework and its implementation, whereas students need to engage in active participation and self-reflection from the beginning of their studies until graduation.

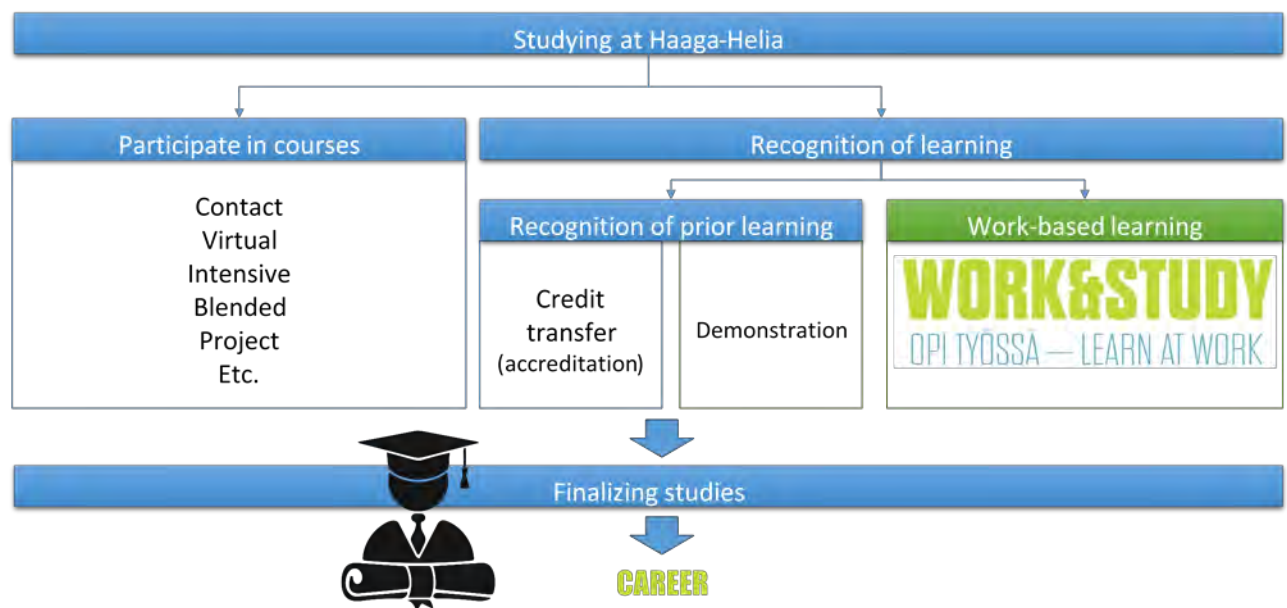


Figure 1: The study and validation context at Haaga-Helia UAS

Work-based learning in the form of Work & Study constitutes an essential learning field for students with permanent jobs or for those who already act as entrepreneurs, yet it also offers an opportunity to accumulate competences and gain credits for those students who are at the starting point of their professional life, since mandatory internships are eligible in the process. The fundamental condition of acceptance is that the student can achieve by working the same intended learning outcomes which are described in the course syllabus.

In the W&S approach, skills and competences required by various courses in the degree are gained by working, by documenting it and by connecting their practical work with a theme-related knowledge base, also referred to as a theoretical framework. The process (Figure 2) starts when students acquaint themselves with the intended learning outcomes of upcoming courses in their degree programme. When the intended learning outcomes are sufficiently related to the tasks of the student's working environment (including voluntary work, internships and placements), the student discusses the opportunity for W&S with the employer. Engagement of the employing organization is a prerequisite in order to obtain feedback on students' performance, and also to ensure that there is support for the process outside the UAS institution.

Intended learning outcomes are screened against the work context: if the match is adequate and the organization supports the endeavour, the students fill in an application form with

her preliminary plan and sends it to the W&S coordinator who can be either a lecturer or an academic advisor. The coordinator checks the plan, discusses it further with the student to establish solid documentation for the lecturers involved, and forwards it to the lecturer(s) of the study modules that are planned to be completed by W&S.

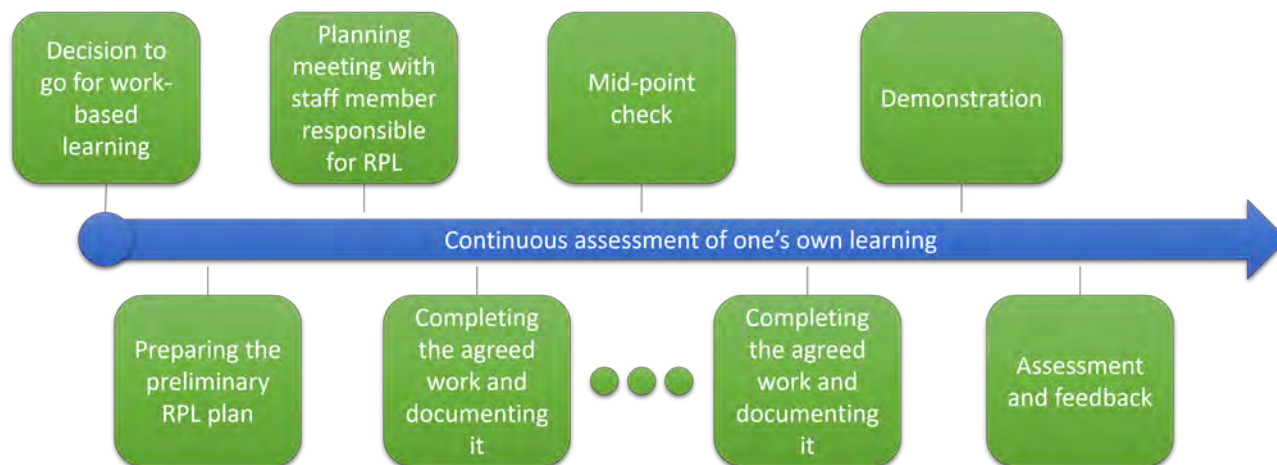


Figure 2: The process of Work & Study for the student

Together, the student and the lecturer decide on the schedule; on the assignments and portfolios to be completed; on possible theoretical background to be studied alongside working; on reporting style and on other details. Moreover, they agree on the nature and schedule of the demonstration of acquired competences. Feedback from the employing organization is also an essential element of the process, yet the final assessment is quality assured by lecturers in charge of the course, who conduct it with the same criteria under which the regular course is assessed. Practice, theory and individual reflection are involved in the embedded learning process, where the criteria suggested by Armsby and Helyer (2016) prevail: evidence on learning should demonstrate relevance, sufficiency, authenticity and currency.

Extensive documentation on W&S is available on the student intranet, and guidance and counselling professionals provide the student with any support needed. Student entrepreneurs may obtain additional support at Haaga-Helia Start-Up School where the specific needs of young entrepreneurs are dealt with, and where mentors and lecturers qualified in entrepreneurship coaching monitor the learning process.

All students at Haaga-Helia may conduct studies through W&S, including full and part-time students, and students in our open UAS path without degree student status. Moreover, exchange students and international degree students may apply for W&S if their schedules can accommodate it and work opportunities are available. When designed with modern pedagogies of learning-by-doing and embedded learning, the process results in more equal learning environments for all. There is no limit for ECTS points obtained by W&S; however, this option is meant to enhance flexibility and employability, rather than become the principal way to study.

Demonstration Days

As in all learning delivered and organized at institutions, knowledge and competences acquired need to be made visible. In the W&S process, demonstration procedures for these

are already planned from the beginning of the process. The culmination points are Demonstration Days at Haaga-Helia: a unique, open event where learning is demonstrated, discussed and hence shared. A variety of tools are applied: pitching, oral presentations, blog and vlog sharing, panels, written assignments, Q&A, displays of tangible documentation as well as portfolio presentation. Furthermore, all students preparing for a Demonstration Day complete a pre-assignment which is submitted to assessing lecturers prior to the event. This pre-assignment is first discussed and then assessed by lecturers, student peers and related industry stakeholders against the competence criteria of each study module. For transparency and reliability, the application of equal assessment criteria is essential, regardless of the type of learning.

Demonstration Days are an occasion to get one's knowledge, skills and competences validated according to the defined learning outcomes of the degree programme and assessed by a multivocal team of lecturers, student peers and, moreover, alumni as industry representatives. Added value is obtained by the complementary process of providing a 5 ECTS credit training programme for those alumni who wish to become co-assessors of learning and participate in Demonstration Days. This training is delivered by the teacher training unit of Haaga-Helia. The trained alumni who volunteer for this responsibility contribute by providing insight into current professional qualifications, thus enabling also the continuous screening of education against evolving working-life criteria. This feature strengthens the institutional connection between education providers and professional life, as well as the personal networks across lecturers, company representatives and various organizations. With this active link between companies and the UAS institution, the event may furthermore become a recruitment opportunity for outstanding students. The Demonstration Day thus establishes a forum for exchanges and a hub for sharing knowledge for all parties, disseminating good practices and enhancing professional networking.

Objectives and framework

The principal aim of the W&S initiative is to improve students' employability, which is one of the most important quality factors laid down for higher education and, moreover, an important element in the funding mechanism of UAS institutions nationally (Mäkelä & Moisio, 2017). The mission of Haaga-Helia UAS states: "We open the doors to future careers." There is a dual meaning: our task is to open the doors for students, both young and of more mature age, and to keep the doors open for the actors of working life itself. In competence-based assessment in higher education, competence can be defined as knowledge, skills and attitudes linked with authentic work (ibid.), and W&S is developed to embed this mindset among students and staff, as well as employers.

The objectives of W&S align with the 2015 recommendations of the European Ministers of Education: enhancing the quality and relevance of learning and teaching, fostering the employability of graduates throughout their working lives and making our systems more inclusive, whilst implementing agreed structural reforms. Moreover, W&S embraces the Nordic Model on validation where the ideal is to maintain the student at the center of all action (Road Map, 2018).

Implementation of W&S is flexible in Haaga-Helia units; however, the principles of the process align with the guidelines in all three units (corresponding to university faculties). A steering group with representatives from the student body, management, lecturers and administration develops, supervises and evaluates the process. W&S is in use since 2014 and is constantly being developed and updated. By W&S, the philosophy of validation is embedded in the pedagogical mindset of UAS lecturers and staff and extended towards the recognition of learning occurring in all contexts. Enhanced knowledge on validation of work

experience is disseminated also to industry stakeholders and alumni who are involved in the process.

National initiatives in Finland continuously build upon the principle of lifelong learning, with supporting actions, and the current government strongly emphasizes the responsibility of education providers as key actors in facilitating LLL as well as the transition from studies to working life. Naturally, lifelong learning includes also transitions from working life back to higher education studies, and in this process a functional and reliable mechanism of recognition of learning has a key role. An increasing number of part-time students at Haaga-Helia already have a degree, they work in the related field and yet wish to enhance their competences with an additional degree or a certificate from higher education studies. An efficient validation process is a pull factor for the institution, alongside flexible opportunities to design one's study path in general. This applies, in particular, to part-time students who oftentimes have challenges in time management.

At present, great interest is focussed on higher education institutions which traditionally have not invested in smoothing professional transitions as much as second-level institutions have. In Finland, an ongoing nationwide project funded by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, Toteemi (2018), is one example of combining the efforts of universities and UAS institutions towards more flexible contexts of work-based learning in higher education, with the objective of researching and developing practical models to combine work and studies. The W&S concept at Haaga-Helia is one of these practice-oriented initiatives, and Haaga-Helia UAS also coordinates the two-year Toteemi project which has an international dimension of validation benchmarking.

CONCLUSION

Efficient learning in contemporary higher education contexts requires that the competence requirements of working life are fully taken into account. In order to identify learning outcomes which are both academically solid and professionally valid, higher education providers need to reach out from the ivory tower of academia and create a dynamic network of stakeholders engaged in maintaining dialogue and exchanging development ideas. Participation in the validation of work-based learning is one field where the expertise and contextual experience of these actors, whether they be alumni or other professionals, may become an asset for the institution, provide added value for the external assessor and, ultimately, benefit the student who always must remain at the centre of all pedagogical initiatives.

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ADULT LIFELONG LEARNING AND COUNSELLING IN LIFE TRANSITIONS: CHALLENGES FOR UNIVERSITIES

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This paper aims to explore the implications of university lifelong learning on professional and personal transitions (and micro-transitions) and the role of adult counselling in supporting and facilitating them. This is a challenge for Italian Universities as national rules are being implemented in the perspective of a National Lifelong Learning System.

In recent decades in Europe different research has analysed the phase between adolescence and entry to adult life, defining it as post-adolescence or youth, the duration of which has increased and has spread to increasing parts of the population and is presented as a sort of long transition.

The extension of youth as a life phase is intertwined with longer periods in education and struggling with labour market integration. This has led research to give more attention to micro-transitions.

From this approach, research has moved on to one (Bresciani & Franchi, 2006; Bridges, 2004; Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997; Merriam, 2005) which recognizes the presence and increase of a series of transitions and micro-transitions in the life of young adults and adults.

An even more relevant change is the shift from a linear conception of biography to the understanding of de-standardized life courses (Brückner & Mayer, 2005). This notion describes the non-linear mixing of the “traditional” markers of transition (conclusion of education, stable labour market integration, creation of a new household). Indeed, different combinations of the “markers of adulthood” are unfolding within life trajectories, and the higher reversibility of the choices which shape biographies makes the transitions less stable and predictable. As the yo-yo metaphor (Biggart & Walther, 2006) explains, movements among different life phases and scopes might be represented as constant oscillations, disrupting the linearity of the “traditional” transitions. Consequently, even work transitions are increasingly distant from the incremental conception of career, as they are more and more shaped by unpredictable changes, which at an individual level entail the need to constantly adapt professional profiles (and biographies) to market requirements. Thus, the capacity to stay on the market and compete is increasingly linked to the possibility of applying a set of individual resources to managing transitions and to effectively selecting adequate training for spendable skills.

As Palma (2017) explains well, transition is a phenomenon which increasingly more frequently - due to its pervasiveness - needs to be dealt with and managed in a positive way (Ecclestone, 2009), but it also presents itself as a particularly thorny key-change. This is because it is the moment in which work experience ends and we must prepare for a new, sometimes unknown and indefinite situation. It is possible to clearly recognize the differences in the management of expected or unexpected transitions; a distinction can still be found between the management of transitions which are self-initiated - and therefore sought by the individual - or forced transitions - experienced by the individual without having been chosen by them. However, as Merriam (2005) reminds us, a lot depends on how the transition is perceived personally by whoever experiences it, and not only on the type of transition or on the meanings that the individual attributes to the transition. Indeed, the way in which individuals encounter transition and the meaning they attribute to it can make a

difference. In order to be a learning opportunity, the transition also requires support for the way it is perceived and managed.

Reliance on age as a key organizing principle reinforces a normative approach to learning and disconnects learning from the context and circumstances of individuals and communities. Although significant advances have been made, educational systems still reflect the age-based nature of their origins in the 1950s. Early school leavers (or “dropouts”), in particular, find themselves shut out because, having left school, it can be difficult to reconnect with formal education. New models of second-chance education are responding to this challenge, recognizing that age is an artificial barrier to learning and creating stronger articulation between different institutional sites of learning (Wyn, 2014).

Being “self-navigators” is increasingly necessary, in part because the links between education and employment are so complex. Research shows that educational qualifications, although important, do not correspond directly to employment outcomes. (...) Being good navigators requires a conscious approach to personal development so that individuals can see how their personal biography has developed in the past and how it is currently being constructed so that they can make decisions about their future options. Being good navigators also requires a deep understanding of the nature of the social, economic, and political world in which they are living and their relationships with others, locally and globally. (Wyn, 2014: 12).

These findings are confirmed by the first results of an H2020 project, in which the University of Genoa participates, that shows that skill markets and job markets are frequently loosely coupled, especially in Southern European Countries ¹.

These transitions are not only professional. They can refer to entry or return to the workforce, career change or progress, unemployment, retirement, or personal choice, but also a return to university as a free choice. In all these situations, universities offer adults significant and different opportunities. Transitions increasingly take place in the context of highly differentiated systems and workers have to be aware of changing needs and adapt to different contexts (Guichard, 2007; 2008; Guichard & Huteau, 2003).

In Italy, since 2012, there has been a very important change of course in lifelong learning and lifelong guidance policy. Law 92/2012 established the right to lifelong learning. Today, thanks to a series of normative mechanisms, the National Certification of Competences System is “under construction”. In different Regions, it is even possible to certify non-formal and informal competences.

Particularly, in 2014, an Agreement between Government, Regions and Autonomous Provinces about the definition of minimum guidance service standards and professional competences, described the accompanying function in terms of specific experiences of transitions. In university, this activity can take place if the basic organisational and professional requirements are ensured.

The University of Genoa has experience of assessment and certification of competences in apprenticeship projects in tertiary education, paths of Higher Technical Education Training (IFTS - its acronym in Italian), Joint Training courses for teachers and trainers, and in the context of the European project IDEAL (Identifier, Evaluer et Valider: transfer et adaptation d'un dispositif de validation des acquis formels et informels). Research on “Defining a model of certification, integration and validation of competences acquired during professional

¹ Project website <http://www.young-adulllt.eu/>

development courses and training," involved a large distribution company and a consortium of social cooperatives. All these experiences have enhanced the match between different types of learning produced in the world of work and knowledge produced in academia. In addition, the tested model puts people in a position of assessing their own experiences in order to translate their learning into competences, as well as to improve their professional competitiveness or to revalue it or re-enter into the system (see Palumbo, Piccardo & Startari, 2014).

The University Roma Tre promotes the inclusion of students and graduates in the labour market. In addition to a wide range of degree courses, master's degrees and post-graduate courses, the University collaborates in the project "Porta Futuro Rete Università" which aims at the integration of placement services (Stages and Job Placement).

The Stage and Internship Office promotes and supports extra-curricular work experience aimed at facilitating professional choices and the employability of new graduates. It provides for the formalization, in synergy with all study courses, of curricular training internships for its students. It manages the formalization of curricular internships through a portal - www.jobsoul.it - as well as the publication of internship opportunities based on sponsor requests. The Job Placement Office is a result of the University's need to assume the new role of work intermediary assigned by Law 30/2003, and aims to ensure and develop relationships with institutions and companies in order to facilitate the transition of young graduates from university to the world of work. In particular, the office manages the activation, management and coordination of financed projects with funds from the European Social Fund and the Ministry of Labour. A number of different projects have taken place. The Office seeks to match job demand and supply, through the job opportunities on the JobSoul portal; it ensures the maximum dissemination of all placement initiatives promoted by the University, Porta Futuro Rete Università and other external organizations; it provides a mailing list service targeted to specific requests from companies and supports University facilities and companies vis-à-vis the activation of Apprenticeship and Higher Education and Research contracts.

Among the additional available services in the aforesaid project there is professional guidance - the guidance path involves the exploration of attitudes, talents, expectations and individual competences for the achievement of one's professional goals – and the Bilan des compétences.

For adults who return to University, guidance services must provide for recognition and validation of prior learning (Di Rienzo & Proietti, 2013; Palumbo, 2014; Palumbo & Startari, 2013). This new service is a challenge for universities in Italy, as elsewhere. APL is going to be harmonised with the new rules on certification of competencies: a process that requires time, competent human resources, appropriate spaces and financial investments.

All the three missions of the universities, in different ways, are questioned by increasing complexity, labour market crises, and lifelong and lifewide learning implications, not only by the Third Mission (Frignani, 2014; Galliani, Zaggia & Serbati, 2011).

Universities should be able to tackle career changes and transitions, to take into account the life cycle of learning and skills and to develop a useful process for professionals who need to build further projects for their future (Alberici & Di Rienzo, 2010; Alberici & Di Rienzo, 2014).

Another aspect that we must consider is that universities are lacking with regard to skill ecologies and activities that can empower workers to improve their position in the labour market (Loiodice, 2004; Formenti, 2006).

In the aforesaid Guidance Project of the Department of Education of University Roma Tre, *Porta Futuro Rete Università*, various guidance activities took place: a "reduced" pathway of

Bilan des compétences; a guidance pathway and a small project of "alternanza scuola lavoro".

Target-groups were different, for example students who were close to graduation, unemployed graduates and graduate workers.

The Bilan des compétences was organized as a path with three individual interviews and two group meetings, during which some tools of an autobiographical-narrative nature and others useful for the definition of personal and professional development projects were written up, with the support of the consultant. The objective was to reconstruct the study, training, professional and life path of the participant, identifying resources - in terms of competences - and areas for improvement. The Bilan ended with the delivery of the synthesis document by the consultant.

The guidance pathway was organised in two individual interviews. Some questionnaires were completed before the first interview and soon after it. During the second interview, the consultant gave the beneficiary some reflections about expressed guidance needs.

During the last project, five group meetings were organised. The proposed themes were: world of work, curriculum vitae preparation, cover letter, job interview, assessment.

The tendency was to reduce the number of individual activities to enable more people to participate in the initiatives. In spite of this, the results confirm the efficacy of this kind of approach.

The main motivations of beneficiaries were related to the need to recognize their competences, how to enhance them in a CV, and how to present them during an interview. Some of them needed to rediscover the motivation to finish their studies, and the key to support them was the identification of a development project, beyond university, but starting from their personal resources.

As we can see every day, new target-groups of students – and maybe also the standard target-groups – need new services: young adults at risk of dropping out, adults who turn to study, unemployed young adults with a degree.

In general, all these groups need both guidance and certification services, and suitable paths to obtain qualifications or certification useful for insertion or reinsertion into the labour market, not only to meet their individual expectations, but also to meet the needs of society and the economy.

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FOCO GENERACIÓN UJA: A NOVEL LIFE-LONG LEARNING PROGRAMME FOR TRAINING KEY SOFT COMPETENCES IN STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSIDAD DE JAÉN (SPAIN)

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INTRODUCTION

One of the main goals of any university is to prepare its current students for the professional future they will face after graduation. Reaching this goal has become increasingly complex, as current students will be facing a changing job market, quite different from the traditional one. The main feature of the world in which the ongoing university students will develop professionally is its changing and uncertain character. To cope with this situation, it will not be enough to count on a "classical" academic training, focused on the specific knowledge of each degree. Counting on this knowledge will still be essential, but it will need to be complemented with other key soft skills allowing future graduates to achieve excellence as professionals and as responsible and committed members of society, through their ability to adapt to change.

About the Universidad de Jaén

The Universidad de Jaén (UJA) is a public institution founded in 1993, that has its main campus in the city of Jaén, where most faculties and schools are located (Health, Experimental Sciences, Humanities, Social Work, Social and Law Sciences, and Polytechnic); and a second Scientific-Technological campus in the city of Linares with a Polytechnic School, both based in Jaén province (Andalucía, in the south of Spain).

UJA has a wide offering of degrees, with 38 BSc degrees, 42 MSc degrees and 20 PhD programmes. These official programmes are followed by about 15,000 students, mostly from nearby areas. Also, nearly a thousand international students from countries worldwide are studying in UJA, engaged in different exchange programmes. In addition, a significant number of UJA-endorsed degrees, both at graduate and postgraduate levels complement the academic offering of UJA. The university belongs to the Top 50 best young universities in the world (from the Times Higher Education Ranking) and has been awarded with the European seal of excellence EFQM 500+, among other recognitions. Besides the high degree of commitment to research and to social regional development, the main mission of the university is the education of their students.

Soft skills for the 21st century

Studies carried out by different institutions show a great coincidence in the type of transversal competences that students need to incorporate into their curriculum. With little difference, studies published by diverse sources agree on the key competences that will be essential for the professional of the 21st Century. Of particular interest are the similarities between the recommendations of the European Parliament and the European Council about the key competences for life-long learning (2006) and the ones selected by Spanish employers as the competences new graduates need to function adequately in the workplace (Fundación Everis, 2016). A recent internal study conducted at UJA reached similar conclusions. The study explored the competences most valued by different focus groups (students, teaching staff, deans, and area employers), and all of them made reference to the need for training in work-related skills (teamwork, preparation for job interview, problem solving, etc.) and communication skills (professional writing, public speaking, proper verbal communication, etc.). Combining the results of these studies with the missions of UJA, we articulated the list of key competences that every student of our university should incorporate in his or her curriculum. These competences are listed in Table 1, divided in six main areas: (1) Performance in the workplace; (2) Employability and entrepreneurship;

(3) Civic and social values; (4) Digital competence; (5) Cultural competences; and (6) Performance as a university student (see also Robinson, 2015).

Second-language proficiency among its students has been the focus of UJA over the last years, with an important offering of subjects in a second language within bachelor programmes (mostly in English, but also in Italian, French, and German). Additionally, there is an increasing incorporation of visiting faculty in the graduate programmes, which complement the specific language training offered by the Centre for Advanced Studies in Modern Languages of UJA. This Centre is mainly focused on the training and certification of the language competences students need to obtain their official degrees and to participate in exchange programmes. Similarly, there are a large number of complementary activities offered by the different Departments and Schools of the university that cover many of the skills presented in Table 1. However, this training is not structured within a single programme, and it is offered to small groups of students, taking the risk of being overshadowed by training in the specific technical abilities developed in each formal degree.

Table 1. List of key soft competences intended to be developed by all the students of the Universidad de Jaén

| Field | Code | Key Soft Competence |
|-------------------------------------|------|---|
| Performance in the workplace | C1 | Developing skills for cooperative work and team participation, negotiation and leadership. Ability to work in multicultural and multidisciplinary environments |
| | C2 | Incorporating the values of commitment, honesty, responsibility, cooperation, effort and respect in the workplace |
| | C3 | Orientation to results and problem solving |
| | C4 | Learning capacity and adaptation to change. Ability to start and persist and organize their own learning |
| Employability and entrepreneurship | C5 | Knowing and applying the tools for an active job search, and for developing entrepreneurship projects |
| Civic and social values | C6 | Knowing and applying Human Rights, and the principles of equality, solidarity and citizen participation |
| | C7 | Developing an attitude for environmental sustainability and responsible consumption |
| Digital competence | C8 | Knowing and using the Information and Communication Technologies of general interest for all degrees (office, internet, computer security, etc.). |
| Cultural competences | C9 | Cultural expression and awareness |
| Performance as a university student | C10 | Analysing, reasoning critically, thinking creatively and evaluating the learning process by assertively and structurally discussing their own ideas and ideas of others |
| | C11 | Communication skills (oral, written, non-verbal, preparation and defence of reports, presentations, end-of-title projects, ability to debate among peers, in a court or in an interview, etc.), both in the mother tongue and in a second language. |
| | C12 | Knowing and applying study techniques and effective management of time and information |

THE CHALLENGE

The main challenge the university was facing was to design a training programme on soft key skills able to reach the roughly 15,000 students currently engaged full time in one of over a hundred BSc, MSc or PhD study programmes offered at UJA. This programme should be a structured programme, easy to find and follow by students, sustainable, and compatible with their regular activities and academic duties as university students.

THE GOAL

The main goal of the programme is to ensure that every student of UJA has the opportunity to develop the twelve key competences outlined in Table 1 above as the main soft skills most demanded by employers and society in university graduates.

THE MEANS

The programme has been named as Complementary Training in Academic-Professional Competences, and it is part of the more ambitious programme *FoCo Generación UJA* (Complementary Training UJA Generation). The *FoCo Generación UJA* programme focuses on providing UJA students with a complementary training in both transversal competences and competences specific to their official degree, so that every student has the opportunity of designing his or her own tailored *curriculum vitae* during his or her stay at UJA.

As stated above, the main challenge of the programme is that it is intended to reach every student of UJA; assuming that most students remain at the university for four years, the programme had to be designed so that it can end up potentially reaching about 4,000 students each year. In order to reach that number of students with a training programme compatible with their regular academic tasks, the programme was designed as a set of courses that combine online and face-to-face learning.

Every course includes three different modules and it is designed as a 1.5 ECTS course and prepared for attending about 250 students:

- Presentation module. The course starts with a motivational presentation session for all students. The session is scheduled so that it involves the participation of relevant and compelling lecturers, and it is intended to capture students' attention and get them involved in the following parts.
- Online module. The second section of the course is developed as an online course, with a MOOC-like structure. This module is designed so that it can be offered as a stand-alone course if the programme were to be extended to the general public.
- Workshops in small groups. The final section of the course is devoted to training in the specific skills, with practical sessions conducted in groups of 15 to 25 people, depending on the skill type.

The programme includes initially the fifteen courses that are listed in Table 2. Each course is devoted to training in a given soft skill as a main goal, and involves complementary training in other skills from the ones listed in Table 1. Collectively, all the courses train the complete list of defined skills. Students can schedule their training by choosing different courses over several years during their stay at the university.

Each course is independently evaluated and certified. However, the completion of specific combinations of courses may be certified as an UJA-endorsed University award named "*University Extension Diploma in Communication and Interpersonal Management Skills*". To obtain the award a minimum of 5 credits achieved within the programme are required.

Depending on the courses taken by the student the diploma may be endorsed with one or several itineraries on Leadership and Motivation of Work Teams, Effective Communication, or Training for Social Equality.

One key feature of the programme is its flexibility and adaptability. The programme is designed to be under continuous evaluation, and it includes a quality assurance system based on surveys. The programme is open to modification, substitution and inclusion of new courses, based on regular interaction with and feedback from students, teaching staff and society. The offering is completed with other complementary activities, such as workshops, seminars and professional talks.

Table 2. List of courses in the initial version of the Programme of Complementary Training in Academic - Professional Competences during the years 2107-2018 and 2018-2019 at the Universidad de Jaén

| Course Name | Competences | | Itinerary / UJA- Endorsed Degree |
|---|-------------|-----------------|---|
| | Main | Secondary | |
| Applying emotional intelligence in the workplace. Social skills and assertive communication development | C1 | C2, C3, C11 | Leadership and motivation in work teams |
| Motivation, leadership and conflict and negotiation management | C1 | C2, C3, C5, C11 | Leadership and motivation in work teams |
| Teamwork and efficient communication | C1 | C2, C3, C11 | Leadership and motivation in work teams |
| Written expression workshop | C11 | C10 | Effective communication |
| Preparation of end-of-degree papers, reports, and articles | C11 | C1, C2, C3, C10 | Effective communication |
| Fundamentals of oral communication: course on speech and communication strategies | C11 | C1, C5, C9, C10 | Effective communication |
| Preparation of a presentation to the public | C11 | C1, C5, C9, C10 | Effective communication |
| Equality and non-discrimination | C6 | C2, C11 | Training for social equality |
| Human Rights: political, legal, social and work dimensions | C6 | C2, C7 | Training for social equality |
| Ethics and security on the Internet. ICT tools for teamwork | C8 | C1, C2, C3, C11 | |
| Prepare yourself to successfully pass the personnel selection interview | C5 | C2 | |
| Create your curriculum vitae | C5 | 11 | |
| Study techniques and exam preparation | C12 | C4, C10 | |
| Effective management of time and information | C12 | C1, C2, C10 | |
| Environmental Sustainability: everyone's responsibility | C7 | C2, C3, C6 | |

Note. Competence codes corresponds with the competence codes listed in Table 1.

The programme is fully funded by UJA and is offered as complementary training to all students of the official degrees, including international students. No tuition is charged. The composition of the teaching staff of each course is mixed, with the course prepared and taught by the teaching staff of the university coordinated with specialists from other public and private institutions and businesses.

The annual budget of the programme is about €100,000. Expenses are politically justified as the programme is part of the features that make UJA unique, allowing the university to singularize its offering with respect to other competing universities. The programme is intended to be one of the key features of the UJA Generation, and it is being used already in all institutional marketing campaigns.

THE RESULTS

The programme started during the academic year 2017-2018, with an initial offering of 10 courses. Over 1,800 students enrolled in the programme during this academic year. The number of students enrolled in each course ranged from 120 to 250. About ninety percent of the enrolled students were undergraduates. This distribution is explained because undergraduates outnumber graduate students with a distribution of 6 to 1 at UJA, because graduate students are more likely to have already developed the soft abilities throughout their education, and also because the first programme marketing campaign was mainly focused on undergraduate students during the launch of the programme.

Students' and teaching staff's evaluation of the programme has been excellent. The result of the satisfaction polls for the 10 courses taught this academic year ranges around 9 points out of 10, with little variation among courses. However, this year's experience has also shown that there is a significant drop-out rate, with 30 to 50% of enrolled students not finishing the course for which they were registered. Analysis has shown that the main abandonment occurred before the beginning of the course, mostly due to conflict with other activities of the students, but a significant abandonment occurred during the online module in some specific courses. In this second case a further analysis of the content, timing and organization is required in order to reduce this rate in new editions.

THE FUTURE

The complete programme will be available during the academic year 2018-2019 with the full offering of the 15 courses listed in Table 2. The results of the first edition of the programme are very encouraging, though they also show some aspects that need to be improved in future editions. Among the positive aspects and strengths of the programme which stand out are the engagement of the teaching staff with the programme, the interest shown by students, and the flexibility of the programme which will allow it to be adapted as needed in a simple way. The fact that the programme allows students to design their own academic itinerary, building their own individualised tailor-made *curriculum vitae* is something that has been highly valued by them as one important feature of the programme.

The main weakness of the programme is the desertion rate, which may be related to the fact that the courses are free for students, and that there are no actual consequences of dropping the course. Reducing the desertion rate by increasing the quality and the interest of the programme, along with an optimization of the organization will be the main challenges of the programme in the near future. Another important challenge that should be soon tackled is the compatibility of the programme with the official degrees offered by UJA. As an initial approach in that direction, the website of each study programme at UJA has been remodelled so that the student can easily see now which is the complementary training that the university offer for that specific study programme.

This complementary training includes the courses presented here, as they are intended for all the students of UJA, but also comprises other complementary courses and activities that specifically pertain to a particular degree.

Altogether, the implementation of the first edition of the programme can be considered a success. In its first edition, the partial implementation of the programme has reached over 12% of UJA students. The interest shown in the programme by students, society, and employers is quickly growing, so that the programme is becoming a distinct feature of studying at UJA. The programme may be easily transferred to other medium size universities. In parallel, the programme will be extended to graduates and the general public in a more classic LLLP format, through the design and implementation of open online courses, developed as spin-offs of the *FoCo Generación UJA* programme.

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THE CHALLENGE FOR MIGRANTS - HELPING NEWCOMERS DEMONSTRATE THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS IN A NEW COUNTRY

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ABSTRACT

The flow of new migrants and refugees reaching Europe is likely to continue in the coming years. The EC recognises that education plays a crucial role in helping migrants and refugees settle in new countries and environments. From language learning to the recognition of qualifications, education is part of the integration and inclusion process. The newcomers face many challenges, including obstacles in accessing the labour market and in continuing their studies, frequently because their competences are not easily recognised in the host society (their skills and knowledge may not fit into predefined bureaucratic policies and procedures; perhaps documentation is lacking or incomplete; or the curriculum they followed does not match certification structures in the host country).

The VINCE project ¹ is developing university staff training in Validation of Prior Learning (VPL) ², adapting existing proven VPL methods to meet the specific needs of newcomers so that they can access Higher Education (HE) and more easily integrate into European society. The process includes the design of a generic set of guidelines, containing fundamental information on the culture and expectations of Europe, the host country, HE in general, the HE institution in particular, and the VPL arrangements. These guidelines will represent a key tool in designing the training course for HE teachers, validators, advisors and administrators.

The adapted VPL procedures will be trialled with candidates who are newcomers. NGOs will be actively involved in the processes, as full or associate partners, to ensure that the target users and the ultimate beneficiaries are reached at grassroots level and that their interests are represented in all the project phases. The outputs of the project will form the basis of policy recommendations targeted at decision makers at EU, national and institutional levels.

Key words

Informal learning, inclusion, integration, learning outcomes, migrants, non-formal learning, prior learning, recognition, refugees, RPL, validation, VNIL, VPL.

BACKGROUND AND INITIAL WORK

The number of refugees and migrants who reach Europe, escaping from wars or critical life conditions and looking for new life opportunities, has increased dramatically in recent years, and the flow is likely to continue in future years. These newcomers face many challenges in settling in Europe. Among the obstacles they encounter are difficulties in accessing the labour market and / or continuing their studies. Migrants and refugees are in practice often prevented from enjoying their rights by many legal and practical barriers. This also presents an obstacle to their full integration into hosting societies. One of the main challenges newcomers and refugees face is that although they are often educated and skilled, their competences may not be recognised in the host society.

¹ <http://vince.eucen.eu>

² This term varies from country to country. It is also known as or Validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL) or Recognition of prior learning (RPL), for example. VPL has been used throughout this paper as acronym for all these concepts.

Sometimes they reach their destination without documentation that would prove the educational level they had attained in their countries of origin.

With these ideas in mind and wishing to facilitate the integration and the inclusion of newcomers in our societies, eucen decided to develop a project that would give tools to the VPL professionals working with the extra difficulties of assessing migrant and refugee cases for validation. The tools that VINCE is developing will help HE staff understand the newcomers' situation, the type of issues that concern them, and, in summary, the kind of help that they need.

In a first phase of the project, the consortium organised a Peer Learning Seminar where all partners presented their experience working with refugees and migrants, and summarised the challenges that working with newcomers represents. The experiences presented show many similarities, even when the cases were about newcomers arriving from different countries of origin and to different countries of Europe. The coincidences highlighted during the seminar helped to identify the barriers and mitigating factors for the integration and inclusion of migrants and refugees in European welcoming countries. These factors were plotted in Diagram 1 (see below). The barriers and mitigating factors appeared at 3 different levels: at origin, on arrival in Europe and in the welcoming country (or final destination).

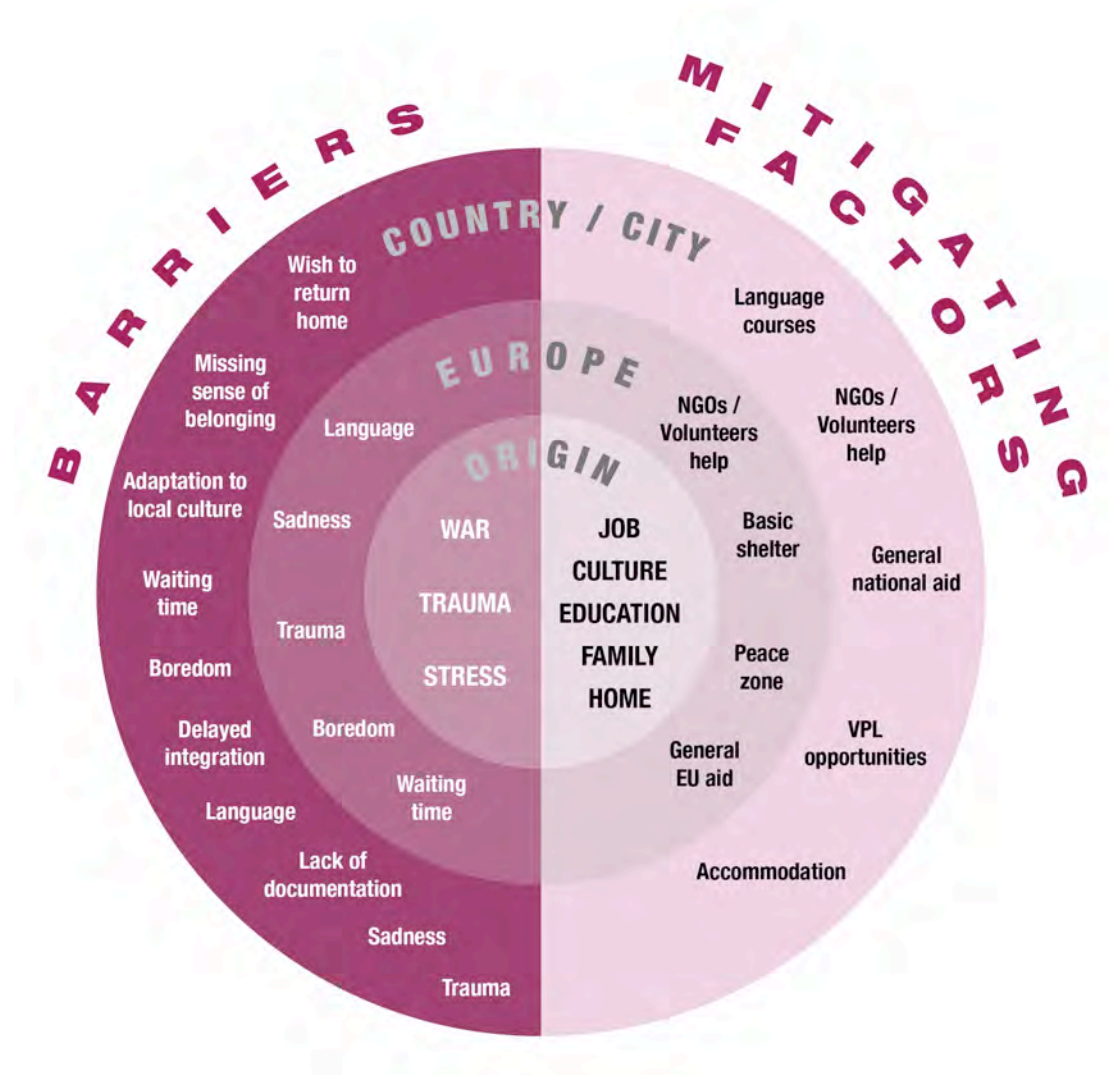


Diagram 1: Barriers and mitigating factors for integration and inclusion of migrants and refugees in European welcoming countries.
C Royo (eucen) 2017, for the VINCE project.

TOOLS ALREADY COMPLETED AND READY FOR USE, AND FORTHCOMING WORK

All these common key facts and issues identified during the first phase of the project have been the basis for the development of a VINCE set of guidelines for VPL professionals. These guidelines are basic tools for VPL professionals to use in their day to day work when helping newcomers through the processes of validation. A list of questions and issues of interest commonly raised by newcomers has been identified, allowing VPL professionals to be better prepared and equipped when helping newcomers. The guidelines are structured in five different levels:

- Welcome to Europe
- Welcome to Higher Education
- Welcome to this Country
- Welcome to this Institution
- Welcome to Validation (migrants and refugees often do not know that validation exists, what it is exactly and how it can be of help to them)

The guidelines have been developed in the form of frequently asked questions (FAQs) and are already available on the VINCE platform. The template relevant to these five guidelines are also available in the project's platform in both PDF and Word formats so that other VPL professionals can download them and adapt them (or translate them) to their own needs.

The VINCE platform is intended to be a convergence point for VPL professionals working with newcomers - a space to discuss, exchange and share points of view on common situations and issues, allowing VPL professionals to help each other and to find possible solutions to similar problems.

Included in the VINCE platform is a reviewed and updated set of country profiles developed by the OBSERVAL-Net project³ that explains the framework for VPL activities in 33 different European countries. In addition, there is also a profile for Europe in general. Also integrated in the platform is the OBSERVAL-Net repository of materials which offers further models of good practice to those VPL professionals that browse the contents. The VINCE platform will, therefore, become with all these materials a source of resources and best practice for VPL professionals.

The project is now developing a short prototype course to train VPL professionals - although they are already prepared to undertake validation processes in general, VPL professionals might not be aware of the peculiarities of working with refugees and migrants. Some generic training will help them reflect on the particularities of this kind of validation processes (i.e. what is the mental state of newcomers when they arrive in our countries? what are their worries or fears? what are their needs?). It will help them also to be resourceful and more flexible and to be prepared to deal with challenging situations, such as language barriers.

The next step in the project will be to write a set of policy recommendations for policy makers - the current migration flows to Europe require us to address the needs not only of the newcomers but also of those receiving and attending the newcomers. This situation has to be brought to the attention of policy makers so that they understand the type of new citizens that arrive in our countries and their needs, as well as the training needs of our professionals working with these new arrivals. The objective of the VINCE policy paper is to influence policy makers so that, on the one hand, they make special provision to improve the newcomers' situation, and, on the other hand, appropriate training and periodical reassurance is provided for the professionals addressing the newcomers' needs.

³ <http://www.observal-net.org>

VINCE AS A VEHICLE FOR PROFESSIONAL TRANSITIONS

Europe is facing a challenge: the flow of migrants and refugees has increased in recent years, and it seems that there will be a continued flow (maybe in smaller proportions) in years to come. The newcomers that arrive in our countries face a problem of integration and inclusion which starts with the barriers that they find when trying to find a job or re-start their studies. In many cases, the lack of official documented accreditation of their skills or previous studies is the first barrier which prevents them from proceeding with their new life.

eucen has always believed that VPL is a powerful tool for social inclusion which gives a second chance to individuals. This alternative route into higher education could help candidates without documentation (such as migrants or refugees) to be recognised for what they have learned during their working life or what they have qualified for in their countries of origin. It can help candidates to identify, analyse and evaluate what they have learned from experience, relate it to formal studies and construct a claim to have their acquired knowledge recognised. It can also help to compare their formal studies to similar studies in Europe and find a way to fill any gap, thus offering them the possibility to acquire new qualifications recognised in Europe. In summary, it is a tool which has the potential to allow European society be fairer to individuals and give credit to their self-growth.

The VINCE project is an example of how VPL processes can be used and can be useful. The project will enhance relations between HEIs and newcomers particularly, and increase trust between the staff from HEIs in general and these new arrivals who know little or nothing about the education system in their welcoming country and/or the institution that is prepared to recognise their previous studies or skills. The project will generate a transfer of knowledge at different levels (i.e. Europe, the welcoming countries, the education system, the specific institution dealing with the new arrivals, etc.) through the developed guidelines (available in several languages), and bring an improved understanding and reflection among the members of staff of HEIs regarding the situation and feelings of displaced people. Empathy and understanding will evolve to a new level.

The final objective of VINCE is to provide tools for the EU countries to understand the skills and knowledge of new arrivals, so that newcomers are equipped with at least the basic validation that allows them to enter the working environment or HE studies, and feel better integrated and more useful both to their families and to the country in which they have settled. Newcomers can feel prouder and more satisfied with their new life and living conditions and become real citizens of Europe with the same rights and obligations.

All these processes will happen when VPL professionals are properly prepared to deal with the cases of newcomers (unusual in the past). VINCE has enabled a space for discussing and sharing situations and solutions amongst VPL professionals. This space can help VPL professionals to find possible solutions to similar problems and to evolve into better prepared validation professionals.

In summary, the five VINCE sets of guidelines will help in giving adequate advice to newcomers (e.g. about Europe, higher education, their host country, the relevant institution and validation); the generic course to train VPL professionals who work with newcomers will help to prepare these professionals to meet the needs of a different type of candidates; and the policy paper will influence policy makers to make special provision to improve the newcomers' situation and to give training to professionals attending to newcomers' needs. This should cover all the areas which need attention in order to ensure adequate advancement of VPL practices in Europe and, thus, facilitate the smooth professional transitions both of newcomers and also of VPL professionals using the VINCE tools available.

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WORKING LIFE-ORIENTATED PROFESSIONAL MASTER'S DEGREE AS A WAY OF PROVIDING CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR ADULT LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

The ongoing health and social care reform in Finland calls for the renewal and updating of the professional skills and competencies of its professionals. One of the central principles of the reform is the reorganization and provision of social and health care services in a client-orientated manner. Thus, there arises the need to be able to learn and possess client-centered counselling skills. This article describes the main results of the teaching experiment carried out with 16 professional Master's degree students during the spring of 2017. The students participated in a course, the aim of which was to learn and become familiar with the method of motivational interviewing by using simulation pedagogy. The aim of the course was to provide the students with the client-centered counselling skills needed for interacting with clients and patients. The data was collected in two focus group interviews, each group consisting of eight students. The data was analyzed using a theory-related content analysis.

The results show that simulation pedagogy is suitable for studying motivational interviewing since it allows for a shared learning experience and reflection for students from various backgrounds in working life (Silvennoinen & Juujärvi, 2018). It can be argued that the Finnish professional Master's degrees are well-suited for updating the professional skills and competencies needed in working life. The Finnish professional Master's degree is a working life-orientated degree and its purpose is to respond to the competence requirements of working life. Moreover, the Finnish professional Master's degree has a more pragmatic and working life-orientated profile than the academic Master's degree. In conclusion, it can be stated that the professional Master's degree acts as an important tool for lifelong learning while providing excellent continuing education for adult learners.

INTRODUCTION

The Finnish health and social care system performs well in many respects. However, there is a need to improve the system due to many factors. According to Couffinhal *et al.* (2016), reform is a necessity because many small municipalities are not able to cover the increased expenses brought about by, for example, the ageing of the population. The present system relies on municipalities to provide social and health care services. Regardless of many positive results, there are inequalities with regard to both access to and the effectiveness of services (Couffinhal *et al.*, 2016). As Couffinhal *et al.* point out, the aim of the health and social care reform is to offer the population equal access to services, to reduce disparities in health and wellbeing and to contain costs. The overarching goal of the reform is to achieve savings of 3 billion euro by 2029. The reform aims at equality for the population, the integration of care and significant costs savings. The reform is ambitious since it aims at both a horizontal integration of primary health care and specialized medical care, but also at a vertical integration in social welfare and health care, such as with persons with multiple problems (Couffinhal *et al.* 2016).

One of the primary aims of the reform is to integrate social and health care services into a 'client-orientated package'. It is expected that the coordination and integration of social and health care services can lead to patient-centred care and service, and increase quality and improve efficiency (Couffinhal *et al.* 2016). It can be argued that under the reform in 'patient-centered care' patients and clients will have both the freedom to and are expected to choose

their care and service providers. Thus, the professionals in social and health care services working with patients and clients need to possess client-centered communication and counselling skills. In turn, therefore, the health and social care reform calls for the renewal and updating of the professional skills and competencies of its professionals. As Berger & Villaume (2013) point out, if the aim is to provide patient-centered or client-centered care, one cannot do that with provider-centered communication.

TOWARDS CLIENT-CENTERED COUNSELLING SKILLS THROUGH MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

One core principle in the Finnish health and social care reform is the reorganization of its services in a manner that highlights the importance of the client-orientated service structure. To address the ever-increasing cost of the health and social care system, which is seen in poor outcomes associated with nonadherence to prescribed health behavior changes, for example, the system has been moving towards patient-centered care and service (Berger & Villaume, 2013). When patients and clients are moved from being passive receivers of services to active participants involved at the heart of decision-making, they will be more committed to implementing a plan they have formulated themselves (Berger & Villaume, 2013).

As Berger & Villaume point out, in order to be patient-centred the HCPs (health care professionals, consisting of both social and health care professionals) need to possess the relevant skills and competencies. They argue that the HCPs have to learn an entirely different way of communicating; they must learn that they are not in control and they are not the only experts, because patients and clients are the experts when it comes to their own lives, goals and aspirations. HCPs, especially those specifically involved in health care, have been taught that they are experts and that they are in charge - they are used to giving directions and telling patients and clients what to do (Berger & Villaume, 2013). To move from provider-centered towards patient and client-centred relationships and interaction, HCPs have to work within the conceptual world of the patient and the client, rather than requiring the patient and the client to work within the conceptual world of the HCP (Berger & Villaume, 2013).

One way of achieving and maintaining patient- and client-centred relationships and communication is to acknowledge how motivational interviewing (MI) can form the foundation for client-centred care and service (Berger & Villaume, 2013). MI is an approach for helping people to change. It is a particular way of having a conversation about change so that it is the client rather than the HCP who articulates the arguments for change (Arkowitz, Miller & Rollnick, 2017a; Miller & Arkowitz, 2017). As Berger and Villaume (2013) point out, MI is not about motivating clients and patients. On the contrary, it is concerned with assessing clients' and patients' motivation and exploring their ambivalence so that they are able to make their own decisions. MI can be understood as an exchange of expertise where the patient or client possesses the expertise concerning his or her life (Berger & Villaume, 2013). In order to be able to "help" the patient or client, HCPs need to understand how the client constructs his or her world and makes sense of it.

Motivational interviewing has had a great impact on research and practice, first in the fields of substance abuse and health-related problems, and later in corrections, social work and education (Arkowitz, Miller & Rollnick, 2017a; Arkowitz, Miller & Rollnick, 2017b). As Miller & Arkowitz (2017) describe, MI consists of four processes. In the first process the client and HCP develop therapeutic alliances that facilitate working together. The second process is called focusing, where the goals and direction of counselling are clarified. With the goal in place, the next, third process, called evoking, involves eliciting the client's own motivations for change. At this stage, the HCP attends to the client's change talk, seeking to evoke,

understand, reflect and explore, and summarize it. When the client is sufficiently ready for change, the MI proceeds to the fourth process of planning (Miller & Arkowitz, 2017). As Miller & Arkowitz point out, it should be understood that the linearity of the processes hardly ever exists as such. In the MI, the HCP provides the conditions for growth and change by communicating with the client in a client-centered manner. In the counselling process the HCP is empathetic, accepting; the HCP honours clients' autonomy and affirms their strengths, and respects each person's absolute worth as a human being (Miller & Arkowitz, 2017).

SIMULATION PEDAGOGY AS THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE TEACHING EXPERIMENT

To be able to practice this client-centred approach with clients, HCPs need to be educated and up-skilled or re-skilled. In the following section, I will describe the theoretical framework and the setting for the teaching experiment. The 16 professional Master's degree students participated in a course in which they learned how to use motivational interviewing in their work. The aim was for them to learn how to use motivational interviewing with clients, and thus learn client-centered communication and counsellings skills. The teaching experiment's theoretical framework was based on simulation pedagogy.

The use of simulation pedagogy in higher education curricula has increased. Many factors are responsible for this growth. For example, students' access to work settings has become more limited, and thus simulation can compensate for learning that otherwise would be learned at work during, for example, internships (Hopwood, Rooney, Boud & Kelly, 2016). Simulation pedagogy can be described as a method in which teaching and learning happens through simulations of authentic cases in a standardized learning environment (Nimmagadda & Murphy, 2014). Simulations allow students to learn from experience, and they enable students to integrate theory, knowledge, skills, and values (Sunarich & Rowan, 2017). Simulation pedagogy provides students with opportunities to practise clinical skills in a safe environment where mistakes can be made safely without negative consequences for others (Hopwood *et al.*, 2016). Simulation pedagogy can be said to be built on the framework of experiential learning theory since it optimizes learning from experience (Nimmagadda & Murphy, 2014). According to Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, learning is most meaningful when it happens through concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation (Sanarich & Rowan, 2017).

Each simulation session consists of three phases. In the first phase (orientation), students become familiar with the case in question by acquiring and acknowledging the theoretical background of the case and learning objectives of the case. In addition to the learning objectives of the case, the students can set their own personal learning objectives. The second phase consists of the actual simulation session in which students either act as the HCP, in the role of a client, or as an observer of the simulation scenario. The last phase is about debriefing the simulation scenario. The debriefing phase is essential for learning in simulation pedagogy. It involves identification and discussion of each student's demonstrated areas of strengths, experiences and areas for improvement; students also learn to receive and provide feedback (Sunarich & Rowan, 2017). In the debriefing phase, the facilitator, such as the teacher, has to integrate the experience with reflection on learning objectives effectively in order for learning to be optimized (Nimmagadda & Murphy, 2014).

The simulation roles (the client, the professional, the observer) all make it possible to have a more holistic understanding of the simulated case. For example, the observer's role is to observe what the student in the HCP role does well and what can be improved (Sunarich & Rowan, 2017). In the same manner, the student acting as a client gets valuable experience

of how it feels to be a client. In simulations, students not only experience temporary embodiment of their future professional selves, but also take on the behaviors and voices of those they will encounter in their work (Hopwood et al., 2016).

THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Here I will describe the research and its major findings (Silvennoinen & Juujärvi, 2018). The results are described in relation to the three phases of simulation pedagogy. In the orientation phase the students became familiar with the theoretical framework of the subject, i.e. motivational interviewing (MI) and they set learning objectives for themselves. The results show that the orientation phase made it possible for the students to acquire both a theoretical and contextual understanding of the subject in advance. The students emphasized that the orientation phase motivated them to learn more, since they were able to set their own learning objectives. The need to set their own learning objectives activated the students' self-reflectiveness. The orientation phase provided a profound learning experience since it gave a structure to learning.

The simulation phase consisted of the simulations of the scenarios. The students had written the scenarios themselves, on the basis of their own working experience. Prior to the actual simulation session, the students had learned and practised the skills of MI in class. This meant that the simulation phase was divided into two: learning and practising the skills of MI via simulation practices and the actual simulation session, which took place in the last part of the course. In the actual simulation session the student groups of three persons acted out the scenarios. The roles in the scenarios were: a client, a professional and a cameraman who recorded the simulation. The cameraman also gave an introduction to the scenario in the video. As the results show, in the simulation phase the students were able to put into practice the acquired skills of MI. The phase provided the students with a deeper understanding of their professional expertise. Both the preparatory simulation practices and the actual simulation scenarios gave the students a possibility to conceptualize and become aware of their tacit knowledge. The conceptualization of tacit knowledge promoted and motivated further learning when the students realized that they had used client-centered counselling skills in their work. The acknowledgment both empowered and motivated the students to learn more. The simulation phase also provided a deeper understanding of multi-professional teamwork, and of the client perspective when acting in different roles.

The debriefing phase brought all the aspects of learning together. In the debriefing session, the students watched the video recordings together and evaluated how well the skills of MI were demonstrated in the scenarios. The students emphasized that profound learning requires getting feedback. The feedback from peers was seen as extremely valuable. The reflective discussions in the debriefing phase affirmed the learning. Also, the role of the teacher as an enabler of learning was seen as crucial. The teacher's role is to create a safe and trusting atmosphere for learning.

CONCLUSION

The Finnish higher education system is comprised of traditional academic universities and universities of applied sciences, and both of these provide degrees at Bachelor's and Master's level. The professional Master's degree was created in the early 2000s and it has a working life-orientated, pragmatic profile (Isopahkala, Rantanen, Raji & Järveläinen, 2011). It has been classified as an adult education degree and in order to qualify to study the professional Master's degree, applicants must have three years of work experience in the field of study. Studies can be carried out while working fulltime. As Isopahkala *et al.* (2011) point out, working life and prior working life experience forms the context where the studies

can be reflected upon, utilized and applied. Moreover, much of the knowledge comes from the other students as they share their own experiences from their working life during the course. The professional Master's degree is a work-development degree and its purpose is to respond to the competence requirements of working life (Isopahkala *et al.*, 2011). The research conducted on the teaching experiment carried out with the professional Master's degree students shows that the degree is an excellent way of updating the professional skills and competencies needed in changing working life. The ever-present link to working life enables the students to apply and practice the acquired skills in the work context immediately. The degree can act as an important tool for lifelong learning because of its relatively compact curriculum structure, which makes it possible to obtain the degree while working fulltime. Also, constant contact with working life representatives and other relevant stakeholders makes it possible to modify the curricula easily to the needs of working life.

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SUPPORTING APPRENTICESHIP AND WORK-BASED LEARNING SCHEMES THROUGH STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR IN-ENTERPRISE TRAINERS / SUPERVISORS AND HIGHER EDUCATION TUTORS / TRAINERS

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ABSTRACT

ApprEnt addresses the challenges of high youth unemployment and the shortage of skills required by employers. It intends to help learners to bridge the gap between the world of education and the job market, fostering their chances of acquiring the skills required by companies through the promotion of work-based learning and apprenticeship schemes. Integration in the labour market of new or returning learners could be strengthened if universities enriched their current HE activities by consolidating existing or new Business-University cooperation and offered more work-based learning and apprenticeships schemes. ApprEnt intends to improve this by enhancing partnerships that involve companies, HEIs as VET providers, and other relevant stakeholders such as public bodies and learners, with the aim of promoting work-based learning and apprenticeship.

Among some of the main specific challenges for setting up or strengthening apprenticeships or work-based learning, ApprEnt identified the role of in-enterprise trainers / supervisors and of HE tutors / trainers as a key component and factor in success. For this reason, the project will undertake staff development workshops for in-enterprise trainers / supervisors and for HE tutors / trainers, designed to support them in working with apprentices. A generic prototype of an agreement and a training model will also be produced.

The project will also develop a prototype model of apprenticeship agreement and an advocacy pack including lines of action addressed to 4 different target groups: education stakeholders, enterprises, public authorities and learners.

The expected overall result of the project will be the establishment of a new and improved concept of partnerships between HEIs and business, aiming to increase apprenticeships and work-based learning schemes amongst the partner institutions and the linked enterprises at regional and local level in order to produce concrete results on the ground.

Key words

Apprenticeship, work-based learning, in-enterprise mentors, higher education supervisors, staff training, university-business partnerships.

BACKGROUND AND INITIAL WORK

Two of the key challenges for education and training in Europe today are **high unemployment among young people** and the **shortage of higher level skills** required by employers. ApprEnt intends to bridge the gap between the world of education and business, enhancing partnerships that involve companies, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as VET providers, and other relevant stakeholders (such as public bodies, representatives of learners and representatives of VET providers) with the ultimate aim of promoting the establishment of work-based learning and especially apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships – and work-based learning schemes in general – help learners to gain a recognised professional qualification while building up practical skills and experience in a real work environment, thus increasing their chances of finding employment at a level appropriate to their knowledge and competences. For universities, apprenticeship schemes promote the value of learning at higher levels and improve the professional dimension and relevance of the curricula and teaching methods, accelerating exchanges with the business world and improving the employment prospects of the learners. Enterprises, on their side, require more highly skilled people with innovation skills and an understanding of the way business functions.

The level of implementation of apprenticeships systems at HE level across Europe is very uneven. Some of the key policy challenges in setting up and strengthening apprenticeships at university level are:

- Administration and quality arrangements associated with apprenticeships;
- Capacity of in-enterprise supervisors to take on additional and higher-level supervision;
- Skills and competences of HE staff;
- Progression from lower level apprenticeships into university courses.

Based on this, eucen launched a project involving a mixed consortium of higher education institutions and Chambers of Commerce / Associations of SMEs with the aim of fostering the sharing of good practices and maximise peer-learning. This happens transnationally in partner meetings and also in each partner country team, where learning focus groups of education institutions and business organisations work together, with representatives of public authorities and learners also contributing to the discussion.

DEFINITION OF HIGHER EDUCATION APPRENTICESHIP

The first thing the partners had to agree upon was a common understanding of what a higher education apprenticeship was. A unified definition of HE apprenticeship was proposed, including 6 main characteristics:

1. Learning alternates between the workplace and an education centre
- 2. Mentoring is a strong aspect preserved by the employer and the HEI**
3. The programme is part of a formal or continuing education training
4. Successful learners receive a recognised certificate
5. The training involves signing a contract or formal agreement by the student / apprentice
6. The apprentices receive remuneration in the form of wage or salary

The mentoring aspect is one that deserves particular attention: mentors on the company side and supervisors on the university side form the key triangle of the apprenticeship scheme, along with the apprentice / student. They support the learner and ensure s/he can be the main actor and author of the learning process. This is why one of the major objectives of ApprEnt will be the design of a generic prototype training model for in-enterprise mentors and for HE tutors / supervisors, to support them in working with apprentices.

In May 2018 the partners participated in a Learning Seminar organised and hosted by P2-UBO, where higher education apprenticeship schemes have been established for several years. During the activity, the ApprEnt partners had the chance to listen to the testimonies of all the main professionals directly involved in the design and implementation of HE apprenticeship schemes at UBO, including in-enterprise mentors and higher education supervisors. The development of the ApprEnt prototype training course will be based on this learning experience and on its adaptation in the partner countries.

THE ROLE OF IN-ENTERPRISE MENTORS AND HIGHER EDUCATION SUPERVISORS

In-enterprise mentors and higher education supervisors have an especially key role in facilitating the dialogue between theory and practice, and in order to do this they need to develop a whole range of abilities: the ability to host, the ability to contextualize, the ability to assess, the ability to provide guidance, the ability to assist, to acknowledge, to integrate. New pedagogical skills are needed by both in-enterprise mentors and higher education supervisors; both need to focus on how the learner learns. Which cognitive model does the learner naturally prefer? Auditive, visual, kinaesthetic? How can this influence the approach and method chosen to facilitate the apprentice's learning pathway?

Mentors within enterprises should be professionalised to be able to perform a set of fundamental actions:

- **They need to be able to identify the skills the learner needs at every stage and to recognise the main phases of the learning process** (assimilation phase and adaptation phase)
- **They need to use a reflective approach and learn how to debrief learning stages at intermediate phases, via face-to-face exchanges with the learner / apprentice.** These debriefing sessions are even more important if the learner starts off very well and then loses momentum / fails to progress satisfactorily
- **They need to know how to intervene and remediate if the learner is not progressing satisfactorily or is failing.** If we imagine the learner's learning process, we can see that most often it is not a linear line, it may have ups and downs, and it may have moments where remedies are needed to correct the trajectory of the process and make sure it can advance smoothly. These are the moments when the mentor should be able to intervene and offer the necessary support and guidance to the learner / apprentice

With regard to HE supervisors, their biggest responsibility and task perhaps consists in **helping the learner to constantly build and strengthen bridges between the world of theory and the world of practice**. It is fundamental to encourage learners to bring questions from the workplace to the university, and to allow for discussion of problems encountered at the workplace. It is therefore misleading to think that once the apprentice gets to the workplace theory is not needed anymore: the path from theory to practice should definitely not be considered as a one-way process.

To conclude, what is key for both HE supervisors and mentors is to have and maintain a correct understanding of the relationship between theory and practice, without falling into the misconception that theory needs simply to be applied in practice. The interplay between theory and practice should be seen as a vital dynamic tension existing between two dimensions: on the academic side, we have the learning of skills; in the workplace, skills are honed and perfected in real work life. Engagement in the workplace therefore requires a constant adaptation and adjustment to context, as well as to the apprentice's own mind-set (reflexive approach). The apprentice can grow in this tension, and through it s/he can develop his/her own professional identity. This is why this tension should not be seen as a problem but rather as a resource. Therefore, when devising and implementing apprenticeship schemes, it is very important to organise a middle space where the two dimensions - theory and practice - can meet and dialogue.

PROJECT OUTPUTS

By the end of the project (projected to be October 2019) ApprEnt will have produced the following outputs:

- A SWOT analysis and a report showing the difficulties and benefits of HE apprenticeship schemes (*already completed*)
- 32 examples of best practice and a transversal analysis (*almost completed*)
- National focus group discussions involving HE institutions and SMEs
- A prototype course and materials for training supervisors within HE and mentors within SMEs to become supervisors and mentors in HE apprenticeships
- Model agreement
- Policy paper and recommendations
- Advocacy pack including lines of action addressed to 4 different target groups: education stakeholders, enterprises, public authorities, learners.

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TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF EXPERIENCING CHANGES IN PROFESSIONAL LIFE BY GENERATION 30+ AND 60+ IN WARSAW

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The term *change* currently plays a special role due to the prevalence of this phenomenon in life to-day. The contemporary world is full of tensions, and its characteristic features are variability, uncertainty, fragmentation and mosaicism. The everyday lives of ordinary members of western societies are now characterized by rapid changes in all areas. Changes relate both to the institutional dimensions of the functioning of individuals in communities and in society, and scientific knowledge - which has never been seen so critically and with such a lack of trust as at present - intimacy, personal relationships, everyday life, work and education.

These postmodern times are called liquid (Bauman, 2007), uncertain (Beck, 2002) unpredictable (Giddens, 2002), and are sometimes called the *culture of rush* (Bauman, 2007; Kargul, 2013). The basic feature of the present is the acceptance of diversity and intensive changes, as well as a characteristic way of thinking, which can be described as partial and hypothetical. Intensive changes are also very characteristic in the professional field. Contemporary people experience many changes in their professional lives, because human work is changing intensively due to technological development and social transitions. In the midst of all of this, I developed an interest in issues connected with lifelong learning from the perspective of experiencing changes in professional life. I was also interested in the difference between two generations – young adults (30+), who are a relatively short time on the labour market, and generation 60+, people who have already experienced long years of work and are preparing for retirement. Especially interesting for me was also the subject of the functions which education can fulfil in this situation of experiencing changes in professional life and the process of transformative learning caused by the change.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research material was collected between December 2015 and October 2016. The research was carried out using characteristic methods for qualitative research and had the character of biographical research. During the analysis and interpretation of the research results, I used the theoretical framework determined by the interpretive paradigm (Malewski, 2001). The use of a qualitative research strategy enabled me to reach the perspective of individual interpretations of the narrators. The subject of the research was a change in professional life seen from the biographical perspective. The impact of professional change on individual (re)constructions of the biography has been considered by taking into account a broader context - both individual - related to the biography of narrators, as well as subjective and socio-cultural.

Among my interests were also the differences (or lack of them) between representatives of two generations in selected ways of (re)constructing their own biography in the situation of professional change. The first group were young adults (30+), who had entered the labour market relatively recently and had been active in the field of professional life for a few years only; and the second group were people in late adulthood (60+) who had most of their working life behind them already, and look at it from the perspective of people who are leaving the labour market soon. The age criterion was used to follow the transformations which happened in the approach to professional change over the last 30 years, in relation to the change of the political system in Poland, economy, the functioning of the labour market and education, as well as a different perspective on adult learning.

26 narrators took part in the research project (13 young adults and 13 people in late adulthood). The sampling procedure was purposive sampling - this type of selection of respondents ensured diversity within a group of people who were homogenous in terms of the level of education and place of residence (Warsaw), thanks to which it was possible to grasp the variability and diversity of the phenomenon during study. The research was conducted using the narrative interview method. The respondents were asked to tell me about the process of their professional and educational life, with particular emphasis on changes occurring in the professional area. In order to understand changes in working life and their impact on individual biographical (re)constructions there was a need to recognize a broader context. For that reason, I needed to gain detailed knowledge about many different areas of individual biographies, so during the study I divided the stories about narrators' lives into the following areas: career planning, the course of professional life, the consequences of changes in professional life, coping with change, self-esteem of narrator.

During the analysis, I used the bricolage technique. Assumptions characteristic for the bricolage refers to mixed technical discourses, when the researcher freely moves between different analytical techniques (Kvale, 2012). Thanks to this eclectic form of data analysis, I could use together various techniques. Analytical techniques which I used were:

- Dividing narrations into homogeneous and consistent segments (*narrative passages*)
- Analysis of each segment (*narrative passage*) and attributing codes to fragments of narration (coding procedure allowed me to categorize data segments by using short titles)
- Creating professional changes typology based on repeated codes
- Recording patterns and schemes for coping with change
- Grouping (which is the analytical basis for selecting functions of education in life of generation 30+ and 60+)
- Making contrasts / comparisons
- Building metaphors (metaphor means understanding one thing with the help of another, which makes it possible to highlight new aspects of the phenomenon being studied)

As a result of the analysis I created a reconstruction of the narrators' reality, although it should be remembered that the collected stories do not reproduce the previous reality, but explain it from specific points of view (Silverman, 2016). Because of this they seem to be more valuable and full of meanings. The narrators decided how detailed their narration was, what kind of descriptions they added to their story, which argumentation they included, and how intimate they wanted their narration to be.

The research results mainly show the issues essential for the Warsaw population (for instance the political and economic transformation in 1989 in Poland has had a significant influence on some differences between the two age groups – 30+ and 60+), but the subject can be seen in a much wider perspective, as we all experience very intensive changes in our professional lives nowadays.

TYPES OF CHANGES IN THE PROFESSIONAL LIFE OF NARRATORS

The 1st category differentiating the changes appearing in the narratives of the respondents was its **source**. The analysis of the collected research material allowed me to identify 3 main reasons for the occurrence of changes in the professional life of the narrators. I pointed out:

- changes caused by the respondents' **own decisions**
- changes caused by **external events** in the narrator's life (influence of significant others, transformations in family life, illness, fortuitous events)
- changes caused by **external historical and social events** (large scale events, changes affecting the whole society/large social groups) having a direct impact on individual life

The narrator's own decision was a frequent source of professional change experienced by members of the 30+ age group. The assumption about realizing person's own needs at work, as well as concentrating on finding the job that is consistent with the interests of the narrator is characteristic for the representatives of the generation 30+ in Warsaw. In the narratives of young adults, professional work was not treated pragmatically and in a utilitarian way as a source of income. According to the respondents, their work should be such a type of activity, and the office (or other workplace) such a place, which would allow them to fulfil their dreams and develop. Professionally active young adults confirmed the huge importance of work which they felt was the most important area of their lives. The decision to change profession or place of work was something treated by the representatives of this age group naturally - if their work did not contribute to their development, self-fulfilment, or did not suit their passions – then it was not something to which they wanted to devote their time and commitment. The interviewees emphasized that working for a long period of time in one place is a waste of time for them, "standing in one place" or even regression. Narrators belonging to the generation 30+ treated their own self-fulfilment as their most important life obligation.

People from generation 60+ perceived this issue differently, especially women. Among the men from this group there appeared statements related to the need for self-realization, while the women I talked to first of all emphasized the issues of household duties, especially taking care of children, as their domain. Speaking about work, they noted that they could have achieved more, but often they did not think it was necessary or even appropriate.

Probably the causes of differences between these two age groups can be found in the changing patterns of contemporary biographies. The pattern of professional biography defined by three phases - the phase of preparation for professional life, the phase of professional activity and the resting phase (and therefore the school-work-retirement formula), currently does not exist (Hurrelmann, 1994; Hajduk, 2001; Malewski, 2001). Young adults who are forced by the conditions of contemporary society to look for new patterns to design their own professional biographies do not have such a high level of trust in social institutions, workplaces or the version of life proposed by society. Narrators belonging to the generation 60+ saw their professional life in a linear way - from the beginning of their first job until the moment of retirement, with possible interruptions for raising children (in the case of women). Once having chosen a specific career path, they accepted its inevitability and predictability and were not surprised by its course. In contrast, young adults experience frequent changes of work, not only in place of employment, but even changes in the professional branch, transformations related to the work, its character and scope; and even complete changes of profession. The most important thing for them is fulfilling one's own needs and realizing individual plans in terms of duty and even compulsion.

The second reason for changes in the professional life of the respondents were random events, not always dependent on the will of the narrators and often external to them. The most frequent events were transformations in family life. Marriage, and in particular the appearance of children, were events that strongly affected the area of professional life of the respondents. These transformations, however, had a different character in the case of women and men, because among women they were associated with the reduction of time devoted to professional work, while among men, with its intensification (especially in generation 60+, in younger group of respondents, this effect was not so clear).

Except for becoming a parent, the external changes in narrators' professional lives were caused by other people in the workplace and outside of it, as well as decisions made by them. Narrators, regardless of gender, pointed to situations that resulted in a change in their professional life, and which were the result of decisions and actions of other people, mostly superiors or family members.

While the effect of changes initiated by the respondents was often assessed positively, in the case of external changes, which were caused by the actions of other people or events, narrators assessed the changes most often negatively. Another source of change in the professional life of respondents which was not the result of their individual decisions was illness. The experience of the illness was associated with the necessity to stop working for some time. The respondents who had survived a serious illness talked about it as "stopping" their working life for a moment. They called this period in their professional biography "living in the waiting room".

The third source of changes in narrators' biographies were historical and social transformations that had an impact on their individual lives. In case of group 60+ one of the most crucial events was the political transformation in Poland in 1989, which people from generation 60+ experienced during their professional life. Many of my interlocutors pointed to the events of 1989 as a breakthrough that opened new options in their work, and enabled them to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the free market, where every business project or idea was something new. Many companies that emerged or began to develop in the transformation period in Poland have achieved success because there was a surplus of demand over supply, and many services appeared in Poland as completely new. Most of the narrators from the age group 60+ indicated a change in the political and economic system as a source of changes in their own professional life.

Among the changes that the age group 30+ experienced together with their entire generation or with the whole society, young adults pointed to some technological changes, but not directly in the context of facilitations related to the use of new technologies, but rather their impact on interpersonal relationships and the content of everyday life. In their opinion the historical experience common for the entire generation was the creation of social media, including Facebook. Contemporary thirty-year-olds admit that social networks have influenced their communication, their way of building relationships and spending free time, even how they work.

The three sources of professional changes which are characterised above are a picture of genesis diversity of transformations in professional life. Considering the category of intensity of changes in professional life, I have identified two types (on the basis of the analysis of the research material):

- **An abrupt (sudden) change** - caused by an unexpected turn in the biography of the individual, the emergence of new opportunities or the disappearance of opportunities that were available earlier
- **Slow change** - long-lasting, processual

Slow change creates an opportunity for preparation, reflection, planning or an adaptation process. Sudden changes do not create such an opportunity. Abrupt changes were often significant turning points in the professional biography of the respondents. Most of my interlocutors perceived sudden changes as better than slow ones, because they brought an exciting "freshness" and intensive actions to the professional area of life. The characteristic feature of slow changes is their long duration. The process of transformation from the initial state to the final stage takes a lot of time in the subjective perspective of life of an individual person. Slow change can be seen rather as a process than a single event.

The duration of the change is another category enabling its more detailed characterisation. Based on the types of changes, appearing in the narratives of the respondents, I distinguished:

- **Periodic change** - lasting only for a specified period, after which all elements of the biographical structure were returning to the previous state
- **Constant change** – when the effects of transformations are permanent and the professional situation of the specific person does not return to its previous state

- **A recurrent (boomerang) change** - the essence of which is a certain repetition in the biography of a particular person. Its characteristic feature is the occurrence of repeating biographical sequences in professional life, connected with doing again the same kinds of actions in new situations, bringing a similar effect each time

Periodic change is related to the disruption of the current biographical structure of the professional area and its end is precisely determined in time. The reasons for this change are events that are related to, for example, a break in work and are perceived by people as temporary, transient. An example of a periodic change is a departure from a place of residence and a temporary change in work connected with this.

In contrast to periodic changes, permanent changes are associated with the permanent transformation of one state into another, with no possibility or prospect of returning to the previous state. There are more permanent changes than periodic ones in biographical constructions. Professional life has a processual character, so most of the stages of this process, after completion, do not repeat. A feature characteristic of permanent change is that the person who experiences such transformation needs to adapt to new conditions.

The third kind of change in professional life, related to its duration, is a boomerang (recurrent) change. Its essence is the repeatability in the biographical structure of a particular person. A man experiencing a boomerang change has a tendency to repeat a certain behavioural pattern that brings a similar effect each time. The change is recurrent in the biography of such a person as a boomerang, which, once thrown, returns to the starting point, to the person who threw it. The main reason for a boomerang change is the use of an inefficient adaptive strategy by the person.

Another category that I took into account when characterising the phenomenon of change was its scope. I identified three subsets:

- **Total change** - a complete change in the professional branch, scope and subject of the activity
- **Partial change** - transformations occurring within one enterprise, changes in its structure and structure of positions
- **Micro-change** - changing the scope and type of activities within one workplace and one position

Total change is the change of the largest scope, involving the transformation of all elements of the professional biography. In this case, the person completely changes professional branch, starts working in a new, unknown field, or makes a complete change to another position.

Partial change, in contrast to total change, concerns only selected elements of professional life, a specific area. Such change may involve transformations taking place in an enterprise or institution. People can adapt more easily to partial change. Because not all elements of working life change at the same time, the person has an opportunity to focus on those aspects that actually become different.

Considering the scope of professional changes, I noticed a third kind of transformation - a micro-change. This is a variation of the partial change, but its characteristic feature is the small range of impact. A micro-change refers to the transformation of the scope or type of activity within one workplace and one post. It may be related to changes in interpersonal relations in the workplace, which affect its quality and character. Micro-change is therefore a change that occurs in the dimension of a single human biography.

In conclusion, the phenomenon of change in professional life has been characterized above by its potential sources and by the categories of intensity, time and scope. A better understanding and knowledge about the types of changes experienced by people in professional life can be an inspiration for adult education theoreticians and practitioners to undertake further research on this phenomenon, as well as to design activities related to ways of coping with the change.

FUNCTIONS OF EDUCATION IN A SITUATION OF EXPERIENCING CHANGES IN PROFESSIONAL LIFE BY GENERATIONS 30+ AND 60+

Taking into account the analysis of research material, I specified six functions (stratification, adaptation, insurance, creating one's own image, entertainment and therapeutic), which education appeared to fulfil in the life of narrators belonging to the age group 30+ and five functions (stratification, insurance, adaptation, therapeutic and social activation) that occurred in lives of respondents in late adulthood, after experiencing changes in their professional life. All of these functions are characterized in three diagrams below:

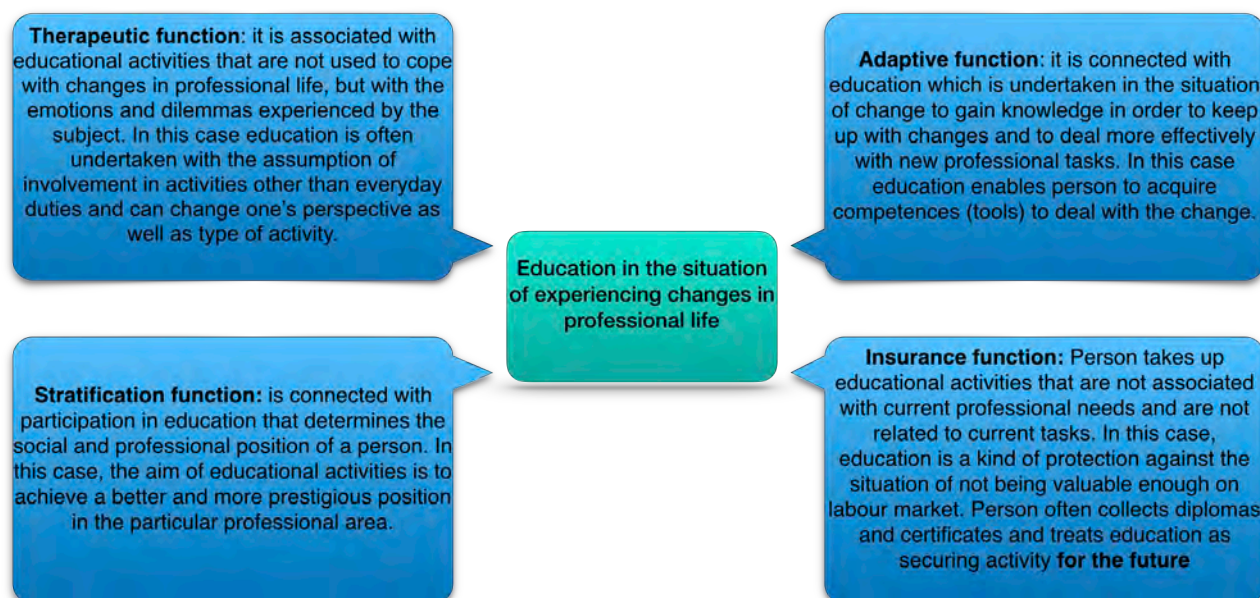


Diagram 1. Functions of education in the situation of experiencing changes in professional life

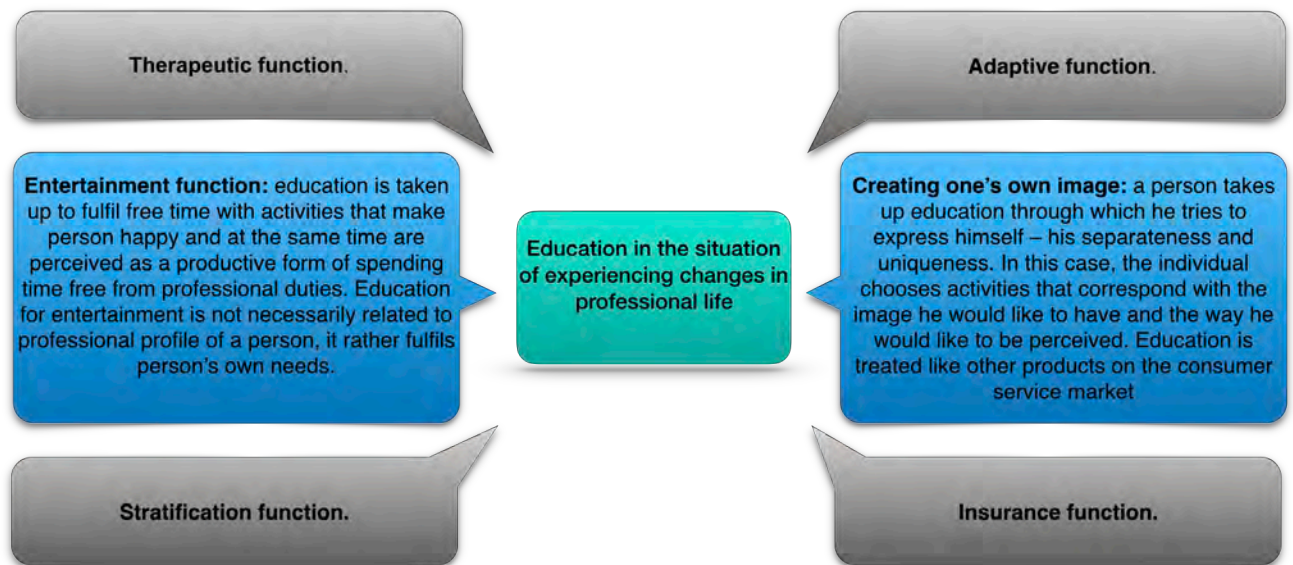


Diagram 2. Functions of education in the situation of experiencing changes in professional life that appeared additionally in narratives of age group 30+

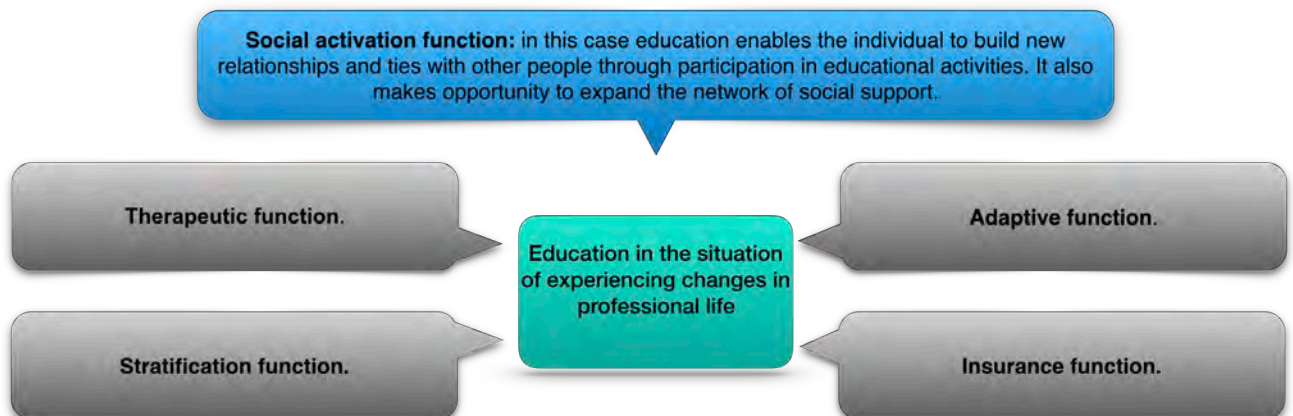


Diagram 3. Functions of education in the situation of experiencing changes in professional life that appeared additionally in narratives of age group 60+

The difference in the approach to educational activities undertaken in a situation of change between the generation 30+ and 60+ is visible in the diagrams above. Those in the group of young adults' treat taking up educational activities as their duty, a necessity, an integral element of professional life as well as life in general. The idea of lifelong learning does not seem to be unknown to this age group, but rather strongly internalized, probably during the socialization process. Young adults treat education in the terms of the free market, often as any other commodity, an article on the shop shelf. They use it to express themselves through actions undertaken and to fill their free time with productive activities. The idea of edutainment (a blend of education and entertainment) seem very familiar to this generation. Therefore, it can be assumed that educational activities are not treated by the age group 30+ as an activity appropriate only for people of adolescent age, but rather as a necessity for every member of our contemporary, dynamically developing and extremely variable society.

In the case of people from the age group 60+, undertaking education in a situation of change is not perceived as an obvious action. Probably educational activities seem to people from this age group more characteristic for a different stage of life and in some way inappropriate or not very useful for people in late adulthood. Although there appeared one additional function of education in narratives of 60+ respondents – the social activation function. The structure of everyday life changes in late adulthood, especially after retirement. Education creates an opportunity to expand one's circle of social relations.

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF EXPERIENCING CHANGES IN PROFESSIONAL LIFE

The assumptions, beliefs and fears that a person has gained during their life can affect the unreflective reproduction of acquired and internalized patterns of behaviour. Change (for instance in professional life) allows us to break this internalized pattern and (re)construct biography in a reflective way. It also allows us to look critically at current activities and views and to reject the dysfunctional frame of reference¹. The essence of Jack Mezirow's theory is a specific way of learning by adults, which results in change in one's vision of the world and self-opinion. Analysing collected narratives, I noticed that professional change can be a factor leading to such transformation and breaking down established patterns of behaviour. It can allow the person to free himself from the previously internalized structures of functioning and make him look for a more adequate, consistent, fit to reality, but also harmonized with his feelings, needs and values, and ways of acting.

Transformative learning leads to the transformation from a non-reflexive or dysfunctional frame of reference into a new, functional and supportive one, so as a result a person can find a better way to understand the world around him and his own needs, as well as perceive his potential. This is possible by experiencing new things (which obviously happens when someone experiences changes in his life), because each experience has meaning to a person, and if he cannot understand new experiences by referring them to already established frame of reference, he must either ignore them or transform his frame of reference into a new / transformed frame (by changing mental habits or points of view).

The need for change sometimes appears together with individual reflection and leads to cognitive and emotional development. Change in professional life can be a factor directly affecting the transformation of the existing frame of reference into a new, functional one which facilitates a person's functioning in the world, not only in the professional area, but also in many others. Change affects the transformation of both mental habits and points of view that together form the frame of reference - a cognitive scheme superior to others. Entering a new situation, changing professional position, changing the scope of duties or the staff group with whom you work, or changing other elements of professional life, make people transform their expectations, beliefs, attitudes and judgments.

To notice the influence of change on the individual's learning, we should follow the learning process according to the scheme proposed by Mezirow. The first stage of transformative learning – the essence of which is changing the previous (inadequate for some reason/s) frame of reference (known as *reframing*) – is a critical reflection about internalized assumptions. Such reflection is connected with analysis, concerning views possessed by the subject, ways of acting and acquired attitudes. A person, who realizes that his beliefs are inadequate to the surrounding reality, begins to think about the accuracy (truthfulness) of acquired knowledge.

¹ One of the most important concepts in Mezirow's theory is the *frame of reference*, which means a culturally established scheme, which person uses to evaluate events, actions and other people's behavior occurring in his life. The frame of reference is therefore a kind of cognitive, emotional and motivational filter through which individuals interpret the world around them (Mezirow 2009).

By comparing possessed beliefs to the experienced situations, a person begins to notice inconsistencies in previously accepted ways of thinking and interpreting reality. What turned out, after analysing collected research material, was that critical reflection about one's way of looking at the world may become the cause of subsequent changes in the way the subject thinks and acts. Narrators admitted that changes in their professional life were a cause of reflection and re-consideration of their ways of thinking and internalized assumptions. Reflection about person's own convictions, at the same time, leads to the awareness that his beliefs were not fully (or not at all) accurate. The critical reflection that appeared at this stage was the basis, allowing people to change their own way of thinking and acting. It was the first stage of the process known as *reframing*. Starting the process of changing the frame of reference is most often associated with the appearance of a certain disorienting dilemma. This process is associated with the observation of both their own lives and the lives of other people, their behaviours and attitudes.

The second stage of transformative learning, according to the scheme proposed by Mezirow, is a *discourse*. This stage is a dialogue internal to the person in which he analyses his own ways of reasoning as well as those of other people. At this stage of transformative learning, it can be seen that the disorienting dilemma, which led to a critical reflection about one's own beliefs, then triggers a dialectical discourse that confirms the best, reflective judgment. The person uses both rational premises and intuitively accepted assumptions to transform his viewpoints and mental habits.

The third and last stage of transformative learning is *action*. It may be connected with taking up a new activity or abandoning any action done previously. The activity is, of course, the result of an earlier discourse, conducted by the subject in an internal dialogue, and may be connected with searching – trying a few options before a person chooses a specific one. After the new actions are taken, an individual begins to reconstruct his life in accordance with the new assumptions – he is trying to adapt different areas of life to the new frame of reference. Taking actions that are consistent with the conclusion emerging from the inner dialogue is the culmination of the process of transformative learning. A person builds competence and self-confidence in new roles, he undertakes various activities aimed at changing the current pattern of behaviour caused by inadequate interpretations made previously.

While analysing collected narratives I followed the scheme proposed by Mezirow. What is interesting is that it appeared that most of narrators were going through the process of transformative learning after experiencing changes in their professional life. I pointed out the stages of the transformative learning process which could be seen really well in narratives from generation 30+. Narrators from generation 60+ also were going through the process of reframing, but they seemed not to be fully aware of inner dialogue. They were a little less reflective, which was surprising as I expected quite different results taking into account their much wider life experience. Probably there is such clear awareness about the person's own reflections among the 30+ age group, because they were raised after the political and economic transformation, which was also connected with the socio-cultural changes in Poland. Especially in big cities, such as Warsaw (where all of the narrators were living), people tended to change their attitude from focusing on collective interests to be more focused on individual ones.

SUMMARY

A person experiencing changes often notices that the current frame of reference becomes inadequate to the surrounding reality. Nowadays, because of the acceleration of the pace of human life, there is an unprecedented accumulation of changes in the relatively short life span of an individual. Contemporaries are forced to cope constantly with change and find ways to adopt to the new conditions. Sometimes this may cause confusion and a constant perceived inadequacy of one's belief system in terms of the actual situation in the surrounding world. It can be assumed that a contemporary person must have a more flexible frame of reference - one that will allow him to make frequent changes and modifications. A less rigid frame of reference can be just a factor conducive to easier and more effective adaptation to change. This would suggest that those living in to-day's ever-changing society must participate in an uninterrupted process of transformative learning in order to be able to act effectively in the surrounding reality. Such learning is, of course, associated with a deep, difficult, sometimes painful reflection on one's own convictions, on one's accepted ways of thinking and acting. It can also be assumed that a frame of reference, established without reflection, consisting of inadequate or false assumptions and beliefs, is a barrier both to the efficient functioning of people in the world and to the process of lifelong learning.

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FROM MOVING BETWEEN DIFFERENT WORLDS TO PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE PERSPECTIVE OF STUDENTS

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INTRODUCTION

This paper draws on the perspective of students with professional experience who studied at a German university for professional studies in different master's programmes. The three-year qualitative longitudinal study includes students' personal statements (letters of motivation) from prior to their studies, group discussions at two different points during studies and interviews following completion of their studies. It focuses on students' expectations and perceptions with regard to their studies and their professional development, moving between their professional work and their studies before, during and after completion of their courses. The research results are presented as three cases showing students' perceptions of their development over the course of their studies. The paper concludes with a critical discussion of the findings with respect to the role of university lifelong learning (ULLL), taking into account students' personal transitions as regards both identity and agency.

CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

The research was conceptualized as an explorative, qualitative longitudinal research study (2012-2015), accompanying students over the course of their studies in a German university specialising in professional studies. The guiding research question was how students perceive their development over the course of their studies.

Twenty-six students took part in the study, ranging in age from 25 to 55 years at the beginning of their studies. Most of them had a first academic degree and at least two years of professional experience, with some students having almost 30 years of professional experience. Their academic and professional backgrounds varied widely. The students were studying in four interdisciplinary job-accompanying master's programmes, in the fields of education, health, and economics and management. As a compulsory component of their studies, all students were required to meet in joint study modules focusing on management skills. All study programmes followed the same blended learning model with alternating distance learning, online courses, face-to-face-seminars as well as a one-week in person component after one year of studying (Cendon, in press). Material for the analysis comprised the students' letters of motivation (written before enrolment); two group discussions with all students (after six months of study and after one year of studies); and guided interviews with four students after the end of their studies. The data was analysed using qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2000).

DEVELOPMENT OVER THE COURSE OF STUDIES – THREE CASE STUDIES

The primary interest of this paper lies in the students' development over the course of their studies, both with regard to their studies and with regard to their professional work. Three case studies are presented illustrating student paths at different stages of their career. Three questions guided the analysis: what are the students' expectations with regard to studies and professional development before the beginning of their studies? ... how do they experience their performance and development during their studies both at the workplace and at university? ... finally, how do they experience and value themselves and their personal and professional development after completion of their studies? Each case study is introduced by a short description that includes their professional and academic background.

Christin: “Getting a scientific approach”

Christin (55) has been head of a nursing school for many years. She has a vocational qualification as a nurse and a certificate as a teacher. She had also studied law previously, but dropped out of university due to personal reasons. Christin looks back on almost 29 years of professional experience. In her professional environment, she experiences the consequences of the academization of nursing. In her motivation letter she states: “In my position as head of a nursing school and further education as a teacher it has become necessary to have an academic degree.” Beyond this felt need she thinks that her professional actions lack a “scientific approach”. Hence, her orientation for studying is directed towards her professional development. Her primary expectations for studying are knowledge acquisition and gaining a sound theoretical foundation of professional knowledge and further personal development. With regard to her professional environment, she wants to improve her professional position and increase her professionalism.

After six months of study Christin states that being a student is challenging especially with regard to managing the designated time for studying: “Time management is also something I cannot handle.” At the same time, she is gaining a new perspective on structures at the workplace: “I recognize dysfunctional structures. And I have already changed three of them. It works. The team follows suit and is highly motivated.”

After one year of studying, Christin recognizes changes with regard to her studies, being a student and dealing with knowledge: “What gives me food for thought is that I am not as good as I thought I am. I don’t know why. It might be related to the fact that I have been reading too much and do not know how to integrate all these things.” Concerning her workplace she admits having become slower and now thinking twice before taking action: “I have become more pensive. Also in class [as teacher], I notice that I spend more time observing people, I’m not as fast anymore. I cannot pin it down yet; it unsettles me a bit, because earlier I had perceived myself as more confident when I was reflecting on myself.”

Five months after successfully completing her studies, Christin reflects on her experiences. She refers to the sometimes lonesome writing of the masters’ thesis and describes her core learning as follows: “That I have confidence in myself and that I also can handle it. [...] If you sit down you can explore a theme and get to the bottom of it.” As a relevant academic outcome of her studies, she describes the publication of her masters thesis as a book and a presentation of the findings at an international conference on IT in health professions. With regard to her professional work, Christin perceives an important development in the social interaction within hierarchical professional settings: “What did change and what I wanted to change is the perceptions and mindsets of higher ranked managers, especially men. I often had the feeling – and this is perceptible in the hierarchical structure of a hospital – that women are on a lower level. And in fact, usually bosses are male. Now I realize that this does not intimidate me that much anymore. [...] Outer appearances make me less uncertain and I can withdraw into myself. And I believe, no I think, actually I do sense, that I can do that now.”

Mark: “Confidence, that’s it”

Mark (38) works as an investigator in the civil service. After a vocational education in hotel management and some years of professional activity, he completed a bachelor’s programme with a focus on law at a university of applied sciences and entered the higher civil service. Since then he has 11 years of work experience. Mark gained a lot of practice-based knowledge at his workplace and took all opportunities for further training. But now he sees the limits of his further professional development. He wants to study in order to deepen his knowledge and to specialize in a field in which he already has some professional

experience. After graduation, he hopes for new possibilities for professional development in new fields, also outside of the sphere of civil service.

After six months of studying Mark reduces his working hours in order to have more time for studying, perceiving that as a “luxury”. He expresses his enjoyment in learning and in being a student: “And because I realized: this is my thing, this is great fun, I take so much with me. I discover skills and competencies from which I say ‘wow that needs to be strengthened’. However, I also discern limits, total weaknesses I will probably never be able to catch up on.” With regard to work, Mark recognizes the limits of transferring his learning: “The themes are there, but I am not allowed to deal with them. They do not want that. That is a pity, because it is do-able, but as soon as you touch upon it, you get negative feedback. This is part of the organizational culture.”

Half a year later, Mark looks more critically on his abilities and his knowledge: “There are fields where you lack too much [knowledge]. And I realized that I need to eat humble pie. And I think that is very important for me because I try to work on my external perception. I think that I am an offensive-oriented person and that I can position myself without always having the respective knowledge. And that helped me to get to know myself, and to see my limits; that is very, very important for me.”

Regarding his professional surroundings Mark draws on his experiences from the course on leadership: “I have learned a lot about myself and the institution I work for. And I realized that one has to reflect a lot on oneself – especially if someone is a leader but also if someone is working for a superior: what are my assumptions? Are they correct? Because that way you can uncover many conflicts and you can attempt to prevent them. That is why for me personally this is extremely important because I have been able to leave my partly entrenched position and defuse one or two situations. Therefore I can say if you are able to distance yourself and to think about what you are doing ... that helped me a lot.”

Looking back five months after completing his studies, Mark sums up what he has gained: “[...] structured working on something, structured problem-solving and confidence, that’s it.” He says that he has developed clarity about himself which helps him in his new job: “I managed to make the break [leaving the public sector and defecting to a consulting firm] and I realized that I am constantly working on new topics, as I am constantly facing challenges at the consulting firm. [...] I think that’s an exciting thing, I am looking forward to it and I have to say that I have become more organized. I am calmer now and more settled, because I know now what I can do. However, I also know what I cannot do, and this is very important, too.”

Paul: “Like a goldfish”

Paul (27) works as an industrial engineer in a company that provides information technology services. Prior to this, he completed a vocational qualification as information manager and studied business informatics. He has been working at this company for two years and wants to stay there longer and invest in his career development. Therefore, Paul’s main interest in studying is to advance his knowledge in business and develop his leadership competencies. One specific objective is to network with his fellow students and teachers, to whom he attributes in advance a lot of practice-based experience and leadership experience.

After his first six months of study, Paul describes his learning strategy as follows: “I bought this beautiful candle and thought: Tonight I sit down with my candle and a learning atmosphere and specify a target, and I work towards it. That way I put myself under a bit of pressure and at the same time motivate myself.” Looking at his professional surroundings he says that now he discerns structures and patterns he did not see before: “Before, one has

been maybe unknowingly like a goldfish in the bowl, not realizing or knowing what's going on around oneself."

After fifteen months of studying, the work in different learning groups is a central topic for Paul. He admits that the level of one's own engagement differs in the various groups, but in general the cohesion of the study group is sound: "No matter who you are with in a role play or a simulated appraisal interview, you always sense that you can give honest and open feedback. You have your own circles but still, the whole thing works well in this group." With regard to his workplace, the aforementioned metaphor of the goldfish in its bowl gets a new frame: it stands for being trapped in one's own point of view. Paul contemplates that: "[...] you insist on your view point, perhaps not letting any other world exist. Then you need to look, if you are maybe trapped too much in your goldfish bowl."

Five months after completing his studies, Paul summarizes his learnings from the studies with regard to his work: "What was interesting for me also, in retrospect, was this study on reflective participants [The reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983)]. To question your standpoint, also from a bird's eye perspective or to put oneself in another person's shoes. Reflection is very, very important, both in the professional and in the private sphere. I think that has helped me to question my own standpoint on many occasions and to look at why other people act in this or that way. How you can better respond to the other person. And this is one of the key points I took with me." With regard to content, Paul sees many topics that he can use within his professional work: "One can call [things] into question in new ways, for example why this or that change in management strategy, or, what I maybe have not questioned before, why this style of leadership. Those were the key topics that I took away with me. I think it changes you a lot without you being aware, because you simply have the possibility to critically question and to break new grounds." In his professional context, his position had changed: "There has been a merger, three additional people came on board and the division will be supervised by me as manager".

OVERALL FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

All three case studies show that the students' motivation for studying and the intended aims and purpose of studies are strongly connected to goals regarding their professional development in different nuances. Following their narratives, for all of them studying had been a success with regard to their intentions and aims, as they managed to achieve what they had aspired to before studying (confirming research results from Beaty, Gibbs, & Morgan, 1997 on learning orientations). For Christin it was settling into her professional position as head of a nursing school, achieving an academic title and working with a more academic or structured approach. For Mark it was the transition from an organization that provided him with no space for displaying his competencies to a company where he can act more freely and develop new topics. And, finally, Paul, who made a step forward in his career path, assuming more responsibility by becoming a team leader in his company.

However, behind this achievement of a professional transition to which studying contributed, a personal transition in the form of a personal development becomes apparent for all three students. They displayed an intense involvement with themselves, their strengths, weaknesses and limits, but also with their professional relationships and their respective organizational structures. This indicates an involvement with their (professional) identities over the course of their studies. All three of them achieved more self-assurance and more self-confidence to position themselves within their respective contexts. They gained more responsibility and agency within their organizational structures and were able to explore new avenues of action.

Whereas personal transitions and personal development need the will and the agency of the students, the question remains as to how ULLL programmes can support these transitions. Three aspects are outlined below:

- (1) The integration of theory and practice in a systematic and structured way in ULLL programmes can be enhanced by developing adequate pedagogical models. Concepts such as work-based learning (Lester & Costley, 2010) or problem-based learning (Barge, 2010) point in this direction
- (2) Distancing, taking a bird's eye perspective, putting oneself in another person's shoes are distinctive ways of learning from experience and of integrating reflection into learning. Hence, there need to be methods and forms of assessment that provide possibilities for reflection and reflective learning (Cendon, 2016)
- (3) Providing students with spaces to reflect, to question themselves and to critically assess their professional work, as well as the academic knowledge they have acquired, has to be facilitated and moderated by teachers. It is they who support and guide a systematic integration of professional experiences into studies and vice versa. (Brockbank & McGill, 2007; Cendon, Mört, & Schiller, 2016)

Taking these three aspects into account when developing ULLL programmes can support students in different stages of their professional careers with regard to their personal development and hence facilitate both their professional *and* their personal transitions.

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NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO SCHOOL FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF YOUNG VOLUNTEERS

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ABSTRACT

This contribution is based on a qualitative study we carried out in Switzerland and which aimed to explore the relationship between resources available in non-profit organizations and the involvement in learning of young volunteers. We conducted 40 interviews with young volunteers aged 16 to 25 years. The aims of our research were firstly to find out what influenced young people to engage in voluntary work. Secondly, to expand the understanding on how, when, and in what circumstances youth voluntary work could be a fruitful and a stimulating learning environment. And finally, to identify and to put a value to the learning outcomes acquired by young volunteers in order to facilitate the transition between their various spheres of activity (training, employment). We indeed wished to support young people in raising their awareness of the learning outcomes which they had achieved in order to connect these with a training or vocational project. The results of the research show that most associations devote special care to welcoming newcomers, set up more or less formalized pathways, and provide support and affordances that favour gradual integration into a community of practice. Young volunteers take advantage of these resources to engage in action, and therefore in learning. The challenge for them is then to become conscious of the wealth of the learning outcomes acquired from voluntary work in order to transfer them to others contexts, such as a training project or professional work.

INTRODUCTION

This article will present the results of a study we conducted for the Swiss Society for the Common Good (SGG/SSUP) two years ago which explored the opportunities of learning offered to young people by formal voluntary work. We will first give some information about the context, aims, target group and methodology of the research. Then, we will present the main results which are illustrated with some excerpts from interviews.

In Switzerland, around 33% of the permanent resident population aged 15 and over had at least one *formal or informal* volunteering activity in 2013 (Bundesamt für Statistik, 2015). *Formal or organized volunteering* is developed in an organization and *informal volunteering* is carried out individually outside of an organizational context. A volunteer is someone who undertakes community service work of his / her own free will without a wage.

The aims of our study were firstly to find out what influenced young people to engage in voluntary work. Secondly, to expand the understanding on how, when, and in what circumstances youth voluntary work may be a fruitful and a stimulating learning environment. Finally, to identify and to put a value to the learning outcomes acquired by young volunteers in order to facilitate the transition between their various spheres of activity (training, employment). We indeed wished to support young people in raising their awareness of the learning outcomes that they had achieved in order to connect these with a training or vocational project.

These are some of the questions we wanted to raise with our research in exploring the context of learning through volunteering activities:

- What are the mechanisms underlying the engagement and longer-term commitment of young people in volunteering activities?
- What is the learning process prevailing in non-profit organizations “employing” young volunteers, and what are the conditions needed in terms of resources and guidance so that this learning occurs?
- What is the nature of the (learning) outcomes developed through voluntary work?

Our main postulate is that voluntary work can be considered as work, even if it is not a paid work; it demands a subjective investment and is realized in a framework with rules and objectives. We thus consider work in a broad sense (Arendt, 1961), and our theoretical framework is focused on French research related to work (Clot, 2001, 2008; Dejours, 1993, 2001). Our research is anchored in a social perspective of learning, and is also inspired by the field of workplace learning (Billet, 2001, 2009; Tynjälä, 2008). The main idea of these authors is that not all places and practices offer equal possibilities to learn and to commit, which is why we interviewed young people from various non-profit organizations with various missions (sport, humanitarian, environmental, protection, cultural, event, entertainment, etc.). To construct the corpus of our qualitative and inductive approach, we have lead 40 semi-structured interviews with young volunteers. We asked our partner the Swiss National Youth Council (SNYC) to help us to find participants aged between 16 and 25 who were either still at school, in vocational training or at university, possibly in transition or even in their early professional activity.

The first questions we asked were focused on the young volunteer’s career. It was a chronological and understanding perspective from the initial choice to do voluntary work to the end of the volunteering activity. Our questions were guided by the French author Simonet (2010), who describes the volunteer’s career in four periods: decision to engage, beginning of engagement, commitment and exit; or in other words, the reasons why volunteers chose to enter, stay and exit from an organization. The second types of questions aimed to identify the learning modes that happen in volunteering activities and also the conditions for learning in non-profit organizations. And finally, the third type of questions focused on the identification of learning outcomes, like skills, competences and new resources developed by volunteering activities.

The answers of the target group were analyzed in conjunction with Nvivo, a content analysis software.

YOUNG VOLUNTEER’S CAREER

Volunteering means both commitment and freedom. Unlike what happens at work or school, one can choose to stop at any time without consequences. Given that the choice to engage in voluntary work is free, that there is no formal ‘good mark’ as in school and no salary as at work, this environment has to be attractive from a young person’s point of view. This raises the question: why do young people stay and commit themselves to the activity? Considering the first phase of the volunteer’s career, we asked ourselves how young people engage in their activities and what the influencing factors for their choice were. In general, we observed that it is very often family and relatives, friends or the local network (neighbourhoods, village, school, and workplace) which act as triggers.

*This is one of my best friends who had two older sisters already in the Youth Organization*¹. (Joël, 19, commercial clerk, Countryside Youth Organization)

We can see very clearly that Joël already knew some people in the organization and that was probably a facilitation factor. Referring to the ethnographic studies of Renahy (2005) and

¹ Quotes from volunteers are translated from oral French.

Retière (2003), it seems that local network acts as a resource for the initial choice. Young people are tapping into the resources of the community and their close environment. Usually, the entry into the association is in continuity, not as a break in the young volunteers' original universe.

After having seen how young people engage, we looked at why they engaged. Firstly, it can be a strong interest in the mission or the main activity of the organization, as we can see from this excerpt of Vincent who had a real passion for media since he was a child:

Since I was little, I have been a fan of media, a radio TV enthusiast, to the point I was doing entertainment alone in my room when I was a kid. (Vincent, 20, student, Webradio)

Very often, young people wish to give back what they have received when they were kids and they feel beholden to society. Search for meaning is also one of the reasons to engage. Some are still teenagers or young adults and they are looking for fulfillment in their lives. Fred speaks about the routine of his life and his wish to do something more and meaningful:

I had reached a point in my life where apprenticeship is always the same, I had arrived in a kind of little routine between work, weekend, friends, job, and I didn't want to just add another string to my bow, but to do something more, that's it! (Fred, 20, apprentice, Gay association)

And finally, if it is generally not the main reason, some are happy to receive free tickets for a concert or for a basketball match. Of course, all these reasons to engage can combine with each other and are not mutually exclusive.

Once they are in the association, what makes young people continue to commit without being obliged to do so? The sense of belonging, good atmosphere and being in a warm and friendly environment plays an important role in young volunteers' commitment.

We made friends. I mean we are thirty firemen, so we are thirty friends. (Dario, 22, student, volunteer firefighter)

The vocabulary is very often linked to the family sphere, as we can see in the following excerpt:

We feel we belong to something special actually. I feel like it's a bit like my second family. I wouldn't have chosen all twenty of them as friends, but they are now all part of my life. (Barbara, 24, commercial clerk, Countryside Youth Organization)

Beyond this social and friendly aspect, there is often a cooperative functioning within a non-profit organization, so the group is used as a support for thinking and moving forward. Our results show that volunteering is a culture which allows young people to take responsibilities and to have access to concrete and new experiences which give them another status.

He said to me: "Hello Madame President" and that made me feel proud and touched, it warmed my heart. (Tiziana, 20, commercial clerk, Youth Parliament)

In addition to having challenges to overcome, it is also for many their first steps in adult life and a way to situate themselves into life and to face reality. Young volunteers are often proud of what they are doing; they can be someone else and implement new skills. Céline explains how she is taking part in an adult world as if she still cannot believe it. She is surprised and at the same time she is very proud of her achievement:

It's funny because I am the manager of the staff and there are people older than me, who are 30 and I'm almost the youngest at 23. It's really strange because I actually have quite a lot of responsibilities. It's really weird anyway to be managing a club (....) Anyway it's a place where a lot of people often go; actually it's one of the best concert halls in the town in my humble opinion. (Céline, 23, student, Event organization)

In contrast to the abstract side of school, some young volunteers appreciate the possibility to be "in true life" and to act on the world. Combined factors like exercising

responsibilities, being listened to and being able to give an opinion that will be taken into account, seem to generate the commitment of young volunteers. The nature of the activity which is proposed to young volunteers plays a very important role for learning opportunities as well as for the reasons to stay in the organization and to commit oneself to the activity. This is probably one of the core success factors for which voluntary work is a rich learning context.

LEARNING PROCESS

I just jumped in the deep end. (Jennifer, 20, student, WWF)

The second axis of our results concerns the learning process. The main learning modes we identified from the corpus were modelling and progressive participation in activities, on-the-job learning and reflexive learning. The first one, observation, is one of the oldest ways of learning. In the beginning of their activity, young people often have a peripheral position and their main activity is to observe the others. Then, by imitating more experienced volunteers, they are able to occupy a different role, and they take part more and more in the activities. This movement in participation, from peripheral to full participation, is described in Lave and Wenger' studies (1991) and is shown in the following excerpt:

In the beginning I watched, it was more the others who were doing and I could see what they were doing and little by little I was given responsibilities or it was me who could do it and it happened like that, I could use the example of what I had seen (Marie, 20, student, Amnesty International)

Quality of learning in an informal context is highly related to the opportunities offered by the environment. For Billett (2001), direct and indirect guidance constitutes a very important resource. We have identified who takes this role in terms of support. There is often a cooperative functioning within a non-profit organization, so the group is used as a support for thinking and moving forward. Non-profit organizations offer opportunities for learning with the use of group debriefing, as illustrated in this excerpt with the Scouts:

It's something we always try to do at Scouts. As soon as we have done special activities, we debrief to try to improve ourselves. (Clara, 22, student, Scouts)

Support can also take the form of individual feedback between an expert and a newcomer. It can be an identified person who takes the role of coach or tutor, as is shown in the excerpt where Emma is very closely guided in the beginning of her activity.

The person I took the position from really coached me a lot. First they told me what this association was, but after that who I can contact? How can I contact them? And he told me: "well we'll try to find out together". (Emma, 16, student, Health Prevention Association)

Senior or experienced volunteers play an important role, even if they are not specifically appointed to fill a role in supporting. Young volunteers very often refer to the experienced volunteers as "seniors".

Other resources concern the structural environment and the material available. One important resource is prescription to be understood in a broad sense: it relates to everything which volunteers can refer to, which guide them in their activities. This includes laws, manuals, codes, internal rules or files left available for them. It concerns everything that has already been thought of before; it's a kind of knowledge capitalization which avoids reinventing the wheel. It gives them a structure in which they know what their autonomy is, what they can or cannot do. Some organizations offer a specific infrastructure and equipment, for example a radio studio. This particular access to technical material affords development of specific technical skills.

In villages, other local organizations or structures often help smaller ones by offering experience, financial help or material support. Some non-profit organizations offer the

possibility to participate in formal training (outside of the organization): for example, the Certificate in Youth and Sports, which is a recognized certificate within Switzerland for coaching sport and outdoors activities with children.

Finally, some organizations plan a structured progression that we named “volunteer’s curriculum”. This means that the organization designed a structured progression and that there is a pedagogical intention behind it. This is especially seen in the Scouts when taking responsibility is planned gradually and naturally from the start:

Scouting is really the best school that I had because it works step by step. We begin at 14 with a small amount of responsibility to look after 10 people every Saturday for 3 hours and then we move up. (Max, 25, Head of a webradio)

TRANSFERABILITY INTO THE WORKPLACE

I learnt a lot and grew up a lot at the camps. Learning to live in a community, to accept differences. (Aurélien, 20, student, Christian youth camp)

Our research also included an interventional part. We organized portfolio workshops with the aim of enabling young people to promote their learning trajectories to potential employers by describing and identifying the skills and resources acquired through volunteer activities, such as *organizing a big event, coaching children during a camp, being responsible for the security of a festival*, etc.

Often, volunteers developed a lot of resources, skills and knowledge through their experience, but in an unconscious way. The objective for the portfolio workshops was then to raise their awareness of what they had learnt. The difficulty is that when one achieves something successfully, it may be by chance, and it may not always be understood how it was achieved (Lainé, 2006). To understand one's own mechanisms and reproduce one's success in different contexts, you have to be able to identify your skills. That is why we wished to help young people to be more conscious of their learning outcomes, and be able to explain their value clearly and with confidence. This was challenging, because the young people were at varying stages of consciousness of their own outcomes. For some of them it was very hard to verbalize their actions. We therefore tried to support them by offering a safe space where they were supported by peers. It is indeed easier to become conscious of an experience and to speak clearly about it if you have to explain it to others. We wanted them to realize what they were able to do after having completed the volunteering period in order to permit them to transfer these outcomes to another context.

To conclude, our results show that the impact of resources afforded by the non-profit organizations, coupled with the willingness of young people to engage in voluntary activities, combined to ensure that voluntary work can be an interesting way to learn and develop skills which are not necessarily taught at school. Therefore, youth voluntary work can be considered as an interesting interface of transition and development for young people. It is a space in-between, which is not salaried work, which is not thought of as a training course and which is much more than a hobby. Indeed, voluntary work provides access to construct experience, to act and to interact in a variety of situations, to socialize in different contexts and to cross boundaries. For all these reasons, youth voluntary work seems to be a valuable way to better understand how young people engage in activities and at the same time learn.

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THE UNIVERSITY IN THE COMMUNITY – LIFELONG LEARNING INITIATIVES AT BABES BOLYAI UNIVERSITY, ROMANIA

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ABSTRACT

The traditional roles and mission of higher education institutions (HEIs) as teaching and research providers have been broadened in order to accommodate activities with various stakeholders in the community (education, research and third-stream services as the OECD promotes). The third-stream services provided by the university refer mainly to knowledge transfer of research outputs, and to the involvement of HEIs in innovation production. Still, through specialized training courses, targeting the specific needs of various non-traditional learners, the university may contribute to the development of new mechanisms for professional development of both university alumni and *newcomers*.

This article aims to highlight the contribution of Babes Bolyai University in the community, as a lifelong learning programmes provider, as a form to capitalize the relevant expertise of teachers and trainers and to validate it on the training market. From the project *University in the community: granting access to Lifelong Learning (LLL) programmes*, to the new initiative of open courses targeting the development of transferrable competencies and niche specialization, Babes Bolyai University is developing new forms of community engagement as a professional training provider for the business environment and local communities as well.

Babes Bolyai University initiatives will be disseminated to the participants in the conference, in order to benefit from experts' feedback, in order to exchange views and practices, and to encourage future partnerships in lifelong learning projects.

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES FOR UNIVERSITIES

Universities are facing so many challenges that need to be addressed in a highly competitive international environment:

- *the need for excellence in teaching activities* (the student-centred approach in teaching and learning to offer a genuine improved student experience for a generation of digitally literate *millennials*)¹
- *the need to innovate in research* and to facilitate knowledge and technological transfer in the business community (universities are more and more present as relevant actors in innovation clusters, generating both radical and incremental innovation, becoming innovative organizations)
- *the need to respond properly to the accountability pressure* coming from various stakeholders: students and their families, public bodies, taxpayers, politicians, business environment, as well as local communities
- *the need to continuously adapt* to the dynamics of national educational policies
- *the need to diversify funding sources* (the scarce governmental funding per student capita to be complemented with national and international funding schemes, based on educational and research projects) etc

¹ Dzuiban et al., (2005) - *Blended learning and the Generations*, available at: <https://cdl.ucf.edu/files/2013/10/Online-blended-generations-presentation.ppt>

HEIs AND THEIR MULTIPLE ROLES

Universities are relevant actors performing on three interconnected stages: education, research and third-stream services.

As far as education is concerned, the last decades have been dominated by efforts to reach ambitious objectives, such as: promoting active learning based on both teachers and students' commitment to perform better; developing blended learning as an effective tool to integrate ICT in tertiary education; fostering continuous curriculum updating relevant to labour market needs; developing highly attractive programmes for the new generations of students (they "place a high value on opportunities for interaction, collaboration and active learning and [...] the majority work part-time, asking for a decreased average study load" ²).

Currently, academic research is facing many challenges, among which we have identified the following:

- difficulties in accessing national and international funding for research projects, in the never-ending race to *make the most of the shrinking resources*
- difficulties in recruitment and retention of highly recognized researchers (tough competition from corporations with performing R&D departments)
- designing *transferrable* research results – research results as outputs in technological transfer
- the increasing pressure for excellence and relevance, coming from different stakeholders – funding bodies, business environment, local communities, public authorities, etc
- the need for multidisciplinary national or international research teams and for collaborative networks to foster radical innovation

The demographic evolution and the skill shortages need also to be addressed, and diversifying the student base represents one of the main mechanisms to contribute to labour market needs. The fast-changing fields of expertise, the constant pressure to meet and indeed exceed performance indicators, the search for excellence in various niches require authentic commitment to lifelong learning for both medium and highly skilled employees. The university as a lifelong learning programmes provider should address:

- the need for new skills and competencies required by the new business models (IT skills, intercultural communication, technological culture, entrepreneurship and social skills)
- the new types of employees (more results-oriented, agile, holistic, eager to enjoy both professional and personal fulfilment)
- the focus on transferrable competencies as a *must* for the great majority of the new occupations
- the valuable offering mix between formal, non-formal and informal learning
- the need to focus on brand recognition – university as high-quality training provider in the community
- the challenge of designing sound financial models for the training programmes

² National Science Foundation (2009), *Current challenges in University Teaching & Learning: Building Excellence in Undergraduate STEM students*, available at: https://www.aaas.org/sites/default/files/content_files/2009.pdf

Third-stream services are most often associated with all the activities that generate, use, apply, and / or exploit knowledge outside the academic environment³. Business counselling and consultancy as well as business-oriented research have represented the main activities that connected the HEIs to the business environment. However, in-house training programmes on fine-tuned topics based on authentic need analysis and customized training models have gained more and more relevance to the complex partnership between academia and the business community.

LIFELONG LEARNING IN ROMANIA – FACTS AND FIGURES

Promoting lifelong learning through a well-articulated mechanism should represent an important priority for Romania, in order to better address the low participation of the adult population in lifelong learning programmes (5 times lower than the EU average).⁴

Lobbying activities by NGOs have finally led to the adoption of the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning, aimed at improving participation in LLL programmes and increasing the labour market relevance of those programmes. The most relevant active measures are meant to broaden access to lifelong learning opportunities for people who are usually underrepresented (i.e. older workers, low-skilled people, Roma, women, rural residents, young people in transition from school to work, persons with disabilities), but also to provide opportunities for other target groups such as teachers and professors, adult learners, training providers, employers, etc.

According to the National Strategy on Lifelong Learning (issued in 2016):⁵

... the LLL service providers operating in Romania include public and private training institutions, employer associations, chambers of commerce and industry, unions, non-governmental organization, and popular universities. At present, more than 2,000 training providers are offering training programmes across the country. Around 60% of them are private providers, 20% are NGO and 20% are organizations financed by public funds. More than 1.3 million certificates have been issued by authorized providers since 2004. Nowadays, the participation of higher education institutions in the market of LLL service provision is limited, despite plunging enrolments in the past years and the opportunities of the LLL market.

In line with the EU target, Romania's main strategic objective for 2020 is that at least 10% of the adult population (aged 25-64) should participate in lifelong learning activities. This objective is covered by three strategic pillars that include coordination, funding and regulatory actions:

Pillar 1: Access and incentives for participation

Pillar 2: Quality and relevance

Pillar 3: Partnerships for better information

According to the National Institute of Statistics, in 2011 only 1.6% of the total working-age population in Romania participated in lifelong learning programmes, versus 8.9% in the EU-27. Five years later, in 2016, the rate had dropped further to an alarming 1.2 %! In Romania, the concept of continuing education has not as yet been fully embraced (only in 1995 was adult education defined as a separate educational activity in the Law of

³ Molas-Gallart, J. and Castro-Martinez, 2007, *Ambiguity and conflict in the development of "Third Mission" indicators, Research Evaluation*, 16(4), 321-330.

⁴ ANC – Istoric EFP, available at: http://www.anc.edu.ro/documente/Istoric_EFP.pdf

⁵ Available at: <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/944481496304564701/The-National-Strategy-for-Lifelong-Learning-mare.pdf>

Education). Many actions need to be taken: from awareness campaigns targeting employees (according to a Eurostat study carried out in 2011, the top three obstacles to participation in education and training for Romanian respondents were: 1. *No need*, 2. *Too expensive*, 3. *Conflict with work schedule*), employers (only 1 in 5 enterprises provided training to their staff in 2011, approximately 10% less than in 2005), the unemployed and NEETs, as well as financial incentives for those involved in professional training.

According to the National Institute of Statistics ⁶, in 2011 the average participation in education for the 25-34 age group was 15% in the EU-27 and 4.1% in Romania. The proportion of young employees aged 15 to 24 who participated in formal or non-formal education was 2.1% in 2011, 11.4 percentage points lower than the European average. In rural areas, there is a shortage of vocational training providers with the specific projects under the Development of Human Resources Sectoral Operational Programme attempting to cover these needs. Only 10% of Romanian young people go abroad for formal or non-formal educational purposes, a rather low percentage when compared to the European average (14%) or to the ten EU countries reporting more than 20%.

BABES BOLYAI UNIVERSITY (BBU) – PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PROVIDER IN THE COMMUNITY

Babes Bolyai University is a traditional, Humboldtian type of institution, with deep roots in Central Europe and strong international academic ties. Its origins date back to 1581, which makes it the oldest institution of higher education in Romania.

It is the largest Romanian university (approximately 45,000 students and 1,700 faculty staff), situated at the confluence of Eastern and Western cultures. Babes Bolyai University is a top university in Romania, with 21 faculties (17 faculties included activities through Hungarian, and 9 faculties through German). For the students enrolled in our institution there were 337 study programmes, undergraduate and master's degrees offered through Romanian; 119 undergraduate and master's programmes through Hungarian, and 18 such programmes offered through German. Multiculturalism represents one of the most relevant strong points of the institution.

Babeş-Bolyai University was recently classified by the Ministry of Education as a “university of advanced research and education”. In the *Best Global Universities 2015* ranking Babeş-Bolyai University ranked 560th in the world; and in *The Times Higher Education* rankings for 2015-2016, Babeş-Bolyai University was the single university in Romania placed in the 501-600 category, at a similar level to other traditional universities in Central and South-Eastern Europe such as Krakow, Warsaw, Budapest, Bratislava and Ljubljana. In 2015 also Babeş-Bolyai University was nominated for the research excellence award offered for the first time by Scopus (Scopus Research Excellence Award).

Babes Bolyai University offers lifelong learning and e-learning programmes for adults interested in developing or upgrading professional skills. Conscious of its role in and responsibilities to civic society, Babes-Bolyai University has always undertaken an active educational role in the community, providing educational offerings and adapting them to the needs expressed by members of society. On this basis, in the last 5 years BBU has defined and developed a platform for lifelong learning targeted at all lifelong learners interested in continuing education at BBU.

The focus on LLL programmes has become more and more visible since specific objectives, clear activities and verifiable indicators were included in the University's annual

⁶ www.insse.ro

operational plan (a specific tool for strategic management). The main objective relevant to LLL in the plan over the last three years refers to continuous improvement and diversification of the LLL courses' portfolio (at least five new programmes to be launched and validated on the training market every year).

From the project *University in the community: granting access to Lifelong Learning programmes* to the new initiative of open courses targeting the development of transferrable competencies and niche specialization, our university has been developing new forms of community engagement as a professional training provider for the business environment as well as local communities.

In 1997, Babes Bolyai University launched the *Centre for Continuing Education and Distance Learning* which aims to develop educational services for adult learners interested in lifelong learning programmes and e-learning relevant to their professional development. Thus, the process of creating and implementing LLL courses has been driven by market needs:

- the genuine interest in professional reorientation
- the rise of new forms of employment (part-time, flexitime, e-working)
- the new skills and competencies required by the new business models
- the focus on transferable competencies (digital skills, cross-cultural communication, project management, entrepreneurship, etc)
- the rise of new forms of teaching and learning (on-campus teaching and learning is being complemented by online courses, flexible forms of courses and seminars to meet the non-traditional learners' needs, etc)

The main educational services offered by the Centre are represented by:

1. Professional training for both administrative and academic staff (digital skills, teaching methods, train the trainers, project management, academic writing)
2. Post-graduate courses certified by the Ministry of Education
3. LLL courses certified by the Ministry of Labour
4. Open courses for all adult learners in the community

In order to offer a better understanding of the progress made by the *Centre for Continuing Education and Distance Learning*, we choose to briefly present the most relevant initiatives that raised awareness of and commitment to LLL programmes within our local community: the project *University in the community: granting access to Lifelong Learning programmes*; the specialised training for faculty staff, and the *open courses programme*.

Launched in 2013, in partnership with and financially supported by the local authorities, the project *University in the community: granting access to Lifelong Learning programmes* was intended to open up university courses to the general public, and it managed to successfully attract 135 participants in the last 5 years, out of which almost 12% passed the final exams and received a certificate.

Even if we have witnessed a low number of participants completing certification to date, the initiative allows members of the community to access the university for the first time, or to return to the university and enjoy the academic experience. Unfortunately, despite the high initial interest for the diverse educational offerings, participants struggle to attend the courses and seminars scheduled in various departments of the university. Some of these participants later opt for LLL programmes certified by the Ministry of Labour (our current offering includes programmes in entrepreneurship, project management, train the trainers, security management, vocational counselling, and skills assessment, arising from the Centre's efforts to provide educational programmes to meet the learners' needs).

Another ambitious goal was to offer free-of-charge specialised training for faculty staff to address their expectations identified by a needs analysis initiative launched three years ago. We consider that we have had significant success in meeting this goal with (since 2016) more than 150 researchers and teachers trained in academic writing; more than 150 administrative staff trained in digital skills (graphics and office related programmes); and more than 40 participants in a technical entrepreneurship programme (the first programme based on special co-training: one university lecturer and one business trainer). The enthusiasm for and involvement in these courses of both trainers and participants represented the highest reward, as one participant stated. The programme has become popular among faculty staff, due to the hands-on nature of the training and the transferability of the skills learned to everyday tasks. Therefore, we are really motivated to preserve and develop these LLL programmes in the years to come.

In 2017, we decided it was high time to find a proper response to one specific need articulated by the business community: flexible, short, interactive and specialised courses to develop specific skills for their employees, delivered by experienced faculty trainers.

Therefore, we set out to design a simple, 2-page procedure for *open courses* (our university is pioneering this programme at the national level). This procedure was analysed closely and approved unanimously by the Administration Council in January 2018. The first step taken by the Centre was to disseminate the procedure among the LLL faculty specialists, and to clarify all the details (both financial and administrative) relating to the steps to be undertaken both at Department level and University Administration level. A few months later, two Departments (Political Sciences and Sociology) launched and successfully organised two fee-based open courses, and another six departments are ready to promote their offerings to the business community. This programme is meant to capitalize on the relevant expertise of faculty teachers and trainers, and to validate it on the training market in an accountable manner.

CONCLUSIONS

Facing the challenges of international competition, HEIs need to find a balance between high-quality teaching and learning, excellence in research and efficient third-stream services.

The dynamics of the education system and training market demand an active role for HEIs as relevant actors with useful contributions to make in the professionalization of LLL programmes.

National funding schemes should address the challenges HEIs are facing nowadays, by granting incentives to open up education, to develop more flexible modes of delivery and to diversify their student population.

Babes Bolyai University, one of the most competitive and prestigious HEIs in Romania, is strongly committed to fostering the development of LLL programmes, to preserving the traditional projects and programmes, and to expanding the innovative flexible programme of open courses both in terms of course topics and training methods.

The support from university management, the responsible involvement of lecturers, the enthusiastic feedback from both faculty staff and non-traditional learners in the community are all key strengths that we want to exploit in order to make the most of the current opportunities in the training market, with the goal of becoming national leaders in LLL programmes among HEIs in Romania.

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LEARNING TO BECOME A COMMUNITY: MAFIA LANDSCAPES LAB

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INTRODUCTION

Various cases of engaged scholarship are currently emerging in Southern Italy, with the aim of fulfilling the institutional role of Universities' Third Mission (TM) (Boffo & Gagliardi, 2015). Engaged scholarship is a relatively new approach (Boyer, 1990; Barker, 2004; Saltmarsh *et al.* 2009; Cuthill, 2010; Inman & Schütze, 2010; Benneworth, 2013) that integrates education, research and service through the practical development of interdisciplinary applied knowledge.

In this framework, learning communities emerge as mixed groups where "... individuals could come to know and respect each other and could share their common interests and different perspectives about problems and topics. They could push one another to appreciate issues in ways that are richer and more penetrating than we understood before ..." (Swanson & Holton, 2005).

Although engaged scholarship is recently gaining ground more and more, in Southern Italy it is rooted in an older and more entrenched issue: how to transfer knowledge and skills generated by universities in order to support local communities in developing at socio-economic levels (Bencardino & Napolitano, 2011). As a matter of fact, in places like Sicily, the issue is how to relate the practice of engaged scholarship, the institutional role of universities' Third Mission and the creation of learning communities with the broader challenge of proposing alternative spaces to the ones affected by the control of the Mafia.

We present a practical experiment of TM and engaged scholarship, which has generated a learning community aimed at reflecting how to react in communities where the mafia has a strong control over the territory. This article discusses the primary results of this project - called *Mafia Landscapes Lab* - that involves students, researchers (mostly from the field of urban planning and educational science) together with local actors (such as local inhabitants, volunteers, administrators) to the development of actionable interdisciplinary knowledge, in a context where the Mafia has a strong control on local social-economic dynamics.

We highlight how the *Mafia Landscapes Lab* is an attempt of experimenting an active, non-violent, anti-mafia practice through service learning and action research within a long-term university-community partnership. We argue that this is crucial for Universities in Southern Italy, although more applications are needed in order to establish such approach not only as experimental cases of TM, but also within core curricula for the benefit of the whole Higher Education system.

THE NEED TO PRACTICE ACTIONABLE KNOWLEDGE IN LANDSCAPES AFFECTED BY THE MAFIA

Mafia has been defined in several ways. The first definition, given by Franchetti in 1876, states that "the term mafia found a class of violent criminals ready and waiting for a name to define them, and, given their special character and importance in Sicilian society, they had the right to a different name from that defining vulgar criminals in other countries". More recently authors, such as Dickie (2004), have given various insights on the characteristics

and history of "Cosa Nostra", describing how the mafia rooted in Sicily and spread internationally (Saviano, 2006).

There exists a mutual influence between the mafia and the society where it is rooted (Sanfilippo & Abbagnato, 2005). Besides, the mafia needs a specific geographic area in order to establish, feed and reproduce itself, a "territory of mafia" or "mafio-genic" social system, characterized by intertwined relations between physical, human, social, cultural, political aspects of a social-ecological system (Gravagno, 2008).

Undermining the "mafio-genic" dynamics requires an interdisciplinary approach for the nature of the discourse and a specific understanding of the educational processes inside communities. Schermi (2010) gives some insights about the apparatus of principles, rules and activities which determine how the mafia *educates* the youth and the people of its realm. It is then necessary to show alternative patterns of lifelong education through tangible examples of different practices of design and care of places. The design and management processes are then intended as a means of subtracting space from the mafia's detrimental apparatuses.

These specific landscapes in Catania's suburbs are easily observed. In these suburbs lack of services, of activities, of public and vibrant places worsen the neighbourhoods; some public spaces are vandalized and abandoned, becoming a fertile ground where criminal activities may easily take roots. Inhabitants that live in these areas have mostly a low social status and a weak cultural background, and are more likely to be controlled by the mafia. Most of them perceive their landscape as uncomfortable, threatening and dangerous, spending most of their time at home, drifting away from each other, losing any sense of community and the will to take care of common spaces.

In the landscapes where the presence of the mafia is powerful, we argue that Universities can play a key institutional role in undermining the "mafio-genic" dynamics through action research (Saija & Gravagno, 2009) and the practice of engagement. Long-term university-community partnerships allow students and faculties to develop action research (Whyte, 1984; Reason & Bradbury, 2001) and service learning (Reardon, 2006; Clifford, 2017), working tightly with the most disadvantaged communities that live within mafia landscapes. These partnerships can be fruitful opportunities for imagining and building alternative scenarios through sound examples of civic engagement. In this sense, these partnerships may be framed as active, non-violent, anti-mafia practices (Sanfilippo, 2005).

Since 2014 LabPEAT (Laboratory for Environmental and Ecological Planning Design) and CUrE (Community University Research Centre), which are both University research centres, have promoted and conducted the *Mafia Landscapes Lab*.

The *Mafia Landscapes Lab* has been an opportunity for conducting action research and service learning within a long-term university-community partnership aimed at experimenting with active non-violent anti-mafia, in the light of Freire's perspective (1970). The *Mafia Landscapes Lab* has also been an attempt to show how a laboratory for students may become an opportunity for the University of Catania to develop its TM, and support local communities in having an active role in changing and developing processes.

MAFIA LANDSCAPES LAB - AN OVERVIEW

Mafia Landscapes Lab is an interdisciplinary course focused on urban planning and community development. The learning process is inspired by the paradigms of Participatory Action Research (PAR) and it is based on the approach of service learning.

The overall goal is to explore landscapes affected by mafia dynamics, studying the mutual interactions between human activities and their visible effects on public spaces. Also, students, young academics, faculties, inhabitants and key-actors from NGOs and governmental agencies become part of a broad Learning Community.

The aim of the Lab is two-fold. On the one hand, the Lab promotes practices of active anti-mafia and community development in derelict neighbourhoods in the metropolitan area of Catania. On the other hand, the Lab aims at raising students' and researchers' awareness regarding policies, strategies, actions and projects to ensure sustainability of active anti-mafia practices in the long run. Specifically, students are called to participate by:

- a) acquiring adequate knowledge and skills for approaching planning and other disciplines taking into account the mafia and "mafio-genic" dynamics;
- b) exploring literature and cases related to "mafio-genic" landscapes;
- c) experiencing the design of a collaborative planning process with local NGOs, communities and institutions;
- d) nurturing self-organization within the Learning Community that we have formed.

The Lab lasts two academic semesters. At the beginning of the first semester, students are introduced to institutional and grassroots key-actors. After a phase of seminars with invited speakers who are mostly key-actors in anti-mafia practices, students are encouraged to conduct desk research, in order to become more aware of the topic. Case studies are discussed before starting the collaborative design process in the field. Case studies are a means of generating questions that then lead the exploration in the field, which is the core of the experience.

In the second semester, students take part in a community-university engagement process, working closely with an Italian NGO called "Libera, Associazioni, Nomi e Numeri contro le mafie" (an anti-mafia organisation) and an international NGO called "Save the Children". Since 2014, "Save the Children" manages a community centre in the district of San Giovanni Galermo. In this district, the criminal power controls some spaces and some legal and illegal economic activities, with a presence of drug dealers along its main streets. The community centre is one of 23 "Light Points" (Punto Luce) of "Save the Children" across Italy, aimed at targetting educational poverty, which is one of the main targets of "Save the Children". The "Light Points" gather children as well as their parents through various learning activities (638 people have been involved in the activities of the "Light Point" of San Giovanni Galermo so far).

Students and community members of the "Light Point", mostly mothers, formed a Research Group (RG). Initial phases of the research activity have been focused on discussing how to work on a common project in order to create a space for social inclusion and change. As a Learning Community, the RG decided to design and implement a new urban landscape, where a community garden has been framed as an opportunity for creating and regenerating social-ecological relationships. The community garden has been co-designed together by students, researchers and the participants from the "Light Point", sharing a variety of expertise and valuing the differences. In this phase, the accomplishment of a scale model has been a device for stimulating a process of co-creativity. Finally, in 2017 the RG started constructing the garden, and in 2018 continued improving it and discussing management strategies.

In the entire process, all the participants shared their competences through the act of designing and taking care of a community space. In this respect, participants have experienced and reflected upon the importance of varieties of different types of knowledge. Students and community members have been asked to prepare several assignments, including the final one, as a collective work of the entire course; this has required the

students to cooperate and to self-organize as a group that gives a specific and informed contribution to a Learning Community.

CHARACTERISTICS, CURRENT CONFIGURATION AND PRIMARY OUTCOMES

Features of our Learning Community

Although we have worked closely in order to form a Learning Community, we believe that it is important to share the specific composition of each sub-group that has contributed to the formation of the whole community.

1. Students. These were mostly Masters students with an architectural/engineering and urban planning background (on average 10 people per year) and undergraduates with an educational science background (on average 10 people per year).
2. Teaching group. Two professors (one in the field of Urban Planning; one in the field of Educational Science / Lifelong Learning and Continuing Education) together with two postdoctoral research fellows at University of Catania - LabPEAT (urban planning).
3. NGOs. Coordinators and activists from Save the Children (3 people) and "Libera, Associazioni, Nomi e Numeri contro le mafie" (2 people) have been fully involved in the project. One person from the service club "Rotaract Catania Est" has been engaged in organizing and coordinating fundraising in 2016-2017.
4. Mothers and fathers from San Giovanni Galermo (20 people on average), together with a group of children (5 people on average) and teenagers (5 people on average) have taken part in the focus groups, in the various initiatives and in the collective design experience of the community garden, as well as in the process of building and managing the garden.
5. Representatives from the Municipality have also participated in some meetings and public events, but they have been the most disengaged group within the Learning Community because of lack of continuity in their involvement.
6. Additionally, 10 students from the Department of Civil Engineering and Architecture, members of the class of 2016-2017, have decided to form an association called "Whole Urban Regeneration" after having taken part in the Lab. They have been taking an active part in the learning community during the 2017-2018 session, working closely with the faculties and the young researchers who are accompanying the new students.

Such a composition has allowed a variety of competences and skills to collaborate where none has dominated the others. Sharing responsibilities, as well as assignments and practical duties, has been the key for creating a group that has worked with horizontal relationships.

What we have learned

As a result of the activities, all learners have acquired the capacity of listening to each other and participating in and conducting focus groups. The RG has acquired and improved skills related to the organisation of public meetings and to the implementation and management of co-design processes. Also, the RG has learned how to self-organise and how to create a Learning Community. Hierarchies have been questioned and learners have been asked to assume an active role in organising, conducting and managing the process.

Focusing on the students, they have been asked to create collective work. The type of collective work, such as reports, presentations, videos, website contents and so forth, has

been decided during the course depending on the input received by students themselves. However, it has been mandatory for each individual student to complete a personal journal with notes and reflections, and with the synthesis of the explored literature, of the case studies and the fieldwork. These journals have demonstrated the individual level of involvement of each student.

Still focusing on the students, we have witnessed an improvement in their public speaking and in their ability to managing collective debates. Students have trained themselves and then have helped the group of involved local inhabitants to do the same. Moreover, students have gained practical skills in collective design and the construction of a common space. Again, they have trained themselves and worked closely with the involved locals who have gained the same practical skills as well.

Participants from the "Light Point" of San Giovanni Galermo have improved their ability to self-organise, and developed a strong sense of ownership for the garden. For example, they have started proposing their own ideas and designing without waiting for the support of the University, while still acknowledging the importance of such collaboration.

Focusing on NGOs and institutions, a Memorandum of Understanding is in the process of being signed between the Municipality of Catania, the involved NGOs and the University of Catania. The relevance of the Memorandum of Understanding is related to the fact that Municipalities are still not familiar with instituting collaborative processes in Sicily: this experience can be an opportunity for learning in this direction as well, both from the governmental and the non-governmental sides.

The most significant result is the acquired awareness and empowerment among the involved local inhabitants; the sense of being able to take action and to make changes. The garden has only been an opportunity to implement their ability to work collectively. Inhabitants have learned that the reality of places, such as San Giovanni Galermo, can be changed thanks to collective conscious action.

CONCLUSIONS

The experiences undertaken at the "Light Point" in San Giovanni Galermo, and presented here, show that Learning Communities are opportunities for demonstrating options that break the *educational* schemes perpetuated by the mafia. Learning Communities are spaces for raising awareness about alternative paths related to the use and care of places, and meanwhile to the improvement of healthy societal relationships. The Learning Community, which we all (students as the future professionals; researchers; local inhabitants; volunteers; some administrators) have started experiencing, has been an opportunity for "... pushing one another to appreciate issues in ways that are richer and more penetrating than we understood before ...".

We argue that the institutional role of Universities is to keep these new ways on track, guaranteeing the sustainability of such processes in the long run. In this respect, the writing and implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding has been proposed as a means for governing such processes, as they tend to become more complex, year after year, and cannot rely only on the experimental trial of a voluntary class or on the voluntary forces inside NGOs.

"Engaged scholars" and those promoting the institutional role of the Third Mission of Universities in South Italy have then the responsibility to catalyse an evolutionary path for our society that aims to bring about a progressive change of the "mafio-genic" system.

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PERSONAL AGENCY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH VOLUNTARY WORK

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ABSTRACT

This article is based on a qualitative study carried out in French-speaking Switzerland, which aimed to better understand how personal agency could reveal, develop or strengthen itself in the context of volunteering. Results – based on analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted with adult volunteers – show that volunteers were able to develop various soft skills. Their commitment also allowed them to develop their network and expertise on specific topics. Moreover, this volunteer experience usually contributed to strengthen the coherence between their ideals – or values – and their practices, thus contributing to identity reinforcement and to affirmation of personal ethics. The voluntary sphere can be considered as a place to develop personal agency and to stimulate subjective investment by offering the opportunity of being an actor and author of one's own life.

INTRODUCTION

This article is based on a qualitative study carried out in French-speaking Switzerland as part of a master's thesis in educational sciences. This research, conducted from a sociological perspective, aimed to better understand how personal agency¹ could reveal, develop or strengthen itself in the context of volunteering (Weber Guisan, 2018). Starting from the premise that individuals are neither totally predetermined nor totally free, the question of their agency has to be raised. Agency could be described as the leeway between freedom and constraint(s), or, according to Evans (2016: 105), as the "ability to give direction to one's life"².

From a lifelong learning point of view, and more particularly in the approaches that focus on individual trajectories, the question of agency is central. Indeed, contemporary trajectories are less and less linear and instituted (Bessin, 2009). Since the 1980s, in a social and economic context marked by uncertainty and the erosion of institutional structures, individuals are enjoined to build their career and personal life on a moving basis. But what can individuals really achieve, with the resources and constraints that are theirs? Evans (2007: 17) proposes the concept of "bounded agency [which] is socially situated agency, influenced but not determined by environments and emphasizing internalized frames of reference as well as external actions". Evans (2016: 112) specifies also: "What limits us also contains affordances that allow us to think, feel and act".

In the field of adult education, it is important to question the capacity of individuals to orient their future, not only because it is a contemporary form of social injunction, but because this injunction is not always supported by an in-depth reflection on the possibility for individuals to really be actors of their own lives.

¹ In French, I used the expression « pouvoir d'agir » to speak about agency.

² Except for Evans (2007) whose text was already in English, I have translated all of the authors' quotations from French.

These numerous questions around a rather vague concept make a new question emerge, one of methodological order: how to observe agency in order to better understand it?

I chose volunteer work as exploration ground for agency. It is a social space where people engage on a voluntary and unpaid basis; so we can assume that it is a less constrained environment than paid work, for example. The voluntary sphere thus became the field of my reflection on agency, especially because several dimensions puzzled me: ... what motivates people to commit themselves without a salary? ... what are they looking for that they cannot find elsewhere? Finally, I asked myself to what extent voluntary work could be a way to deploy and develop one's agency.

This study is based on the trajectories of eight volunteers, aged from 37 to 63. Most of them were professionally active and involved in various types of volunteer activities (environmental protection, sport and politics, social and humanitarian care). Semi-structured interviews were conducted under a biographical approach in order to better understand whether, and how, volunteer practice contributes to the revelation, development and / or strengthening of personal agency among the interviewees. Interviews were recorded and fully transcribed. They were then coded with NVivo[®] software and analysed under a grounded theory approach.

The results presented below are empirically supported and are organized around three axes: reasons for commitment, scope of the contribution and learning through volunteering.

WHY VOLUNTEERING?

The compensatory value of volunteer work in relation to professional work

A first important point is the omnipresent link of paid work in the discourse of volunteers. In her studies on volunteering, Simonet-Cusset (2004) establishes a typology that situates how volunteer involvement is linked, in parallel or even in opposition, to professional involvement. Thus, voluntary commitment can be a substitute, an extension or compensation to a professional life or a lever for professional reorientation (ibid: 148).

The case of Ariane, 39, who was unable to complete her studies as an agricultural engineer and ended up in professional positions of no interest to her, is an illustration of the compensatory dimension of volunteering. By the age of 30, she was volunteering in a nature conservation organisation:

*I was completely frustrated, [...] I didn't have my engineering degree, and then I was doing secretarial work that I had run away from a few years before [...] I needed some breathing space.*³

For me it's two different worlds. There's the world of work where I do a job that I'm not interested in and don't believe in, and then there's the world of volunteer work where I do something that I'm interested in and believe in.

The voluntary sphere compensates for Ariane's professional life, which is not very fulfilling, and thus repairs a degraded image of herself. Volunteering acts as a restorative element and reinforces Ariane's identity and values. The agency defined in her professional sphere can deploy and embody in her voluntary sphere.

³ Quotes from volunteers are translated from oral French. It was not always possible to translate idioms exactly.

Recognition, self-definition and identity development

Still in connection with the professional sphere, it appears that volunteering can generate a form of recognition that is detached from paid work. Laure, 39, devotes herself almost entirely to her volunteer activities after having worked for many years in the pharmaceutical field. She now helps unemployed people in their job search:

When you stop working, then you realize that you define yourself a lot by that [i.e. professional life] and that it's interesting to detach yourself from it. I realized that I don't need professional recognition all over to get social recognition.

This is similar to Gilles, 38, historian and elected politician, for whom volunteering is a more democratic practice than paid work:

In the voluntary sector, you're no longer everything you are in the professional world; you're an individual in your own right who's committed to something. And finally, we don't care whether you're a truck driver, a lawyer or unemployed, that's not the important thing, the important thing is that you give time for a common cause.

Why is this related to agency? The question of recognition is eminently linked to identity. According to Dubar (1991), identity is never acquired once and for all, but is constantly constructed in a double transaction: identity for oneself and identity for others. This dynamic can be reinforced by voluntary commitment, particularly in the act of having a fresh look of oneself, of being surer about one's own desires, choices, values, potential and capacities. It is linked to the third form of recognition identified by Honneth (2013), self-esteem, which allows one to see oneself as a human being endowed with capabilities and qualities. We saw from Laure's words above that she must conquer an identity "outside work", and that she realizes that by emancipating herself from a restricted professional universe she can be seen differently through other's eyes, that she can have a social recognition beyond a professional one.

Embodying personal values

Many volunteers report a need for coherence between their practices and their values. Volunteering would be a form of embodying their values that would correspond to what Taylor (1994) calls the "ideal of authenticity", which is a form of fidelity to oneself, to express or accomplish one's true self, or, in other words, a self-fulfilment. It is a very personal dimension that responds to the individual's place in contemporary society - being oneself within the social space.

Julia, 52, therapist and volunteer within an organization that provides food to the most vulnerable people says:

It corresponds to my ideals... I do it because I'm convinced of it.

Ariane's discourse goes in the same line:

I had to do something in accordance with my convictions, and also use what I'd learned; I wanted to communicate what I knew.

This aspect is also part of a personal ethic. When Julia says, "I need to feel good about myself", she must put her own values first rather than those of a group.

CONTRIBUTION AND AGENCY

In order to understand this active part of volunteering, I have used the conceptualization of participation proposed by Zask (2011). Full participation results from an articulation between these three parts: taking part, contributing and receiving (benefiting).

This conceptualization seemed opportune to me to reflect on volunteering. Indeed, one voluntarily takes part in the project of an organization. Within it, one brings a personal part which contributes to the definition of the project and its objectives. Finally, resources (offered by the environment) are provided to enable this contribution and, thus, full participation. The question of contribution appears to me to be a key dimension of the agency.

This contributory dimension is reflected in Julia's comments. Her terms are all based on the idea of having an influence on her environment, seeing the result of her action or having the feeling that her action has contributed to shape the situation.

It's a real opportunity to make a difference, the possibility of being an efficient actor. The possibility of moving from a passive status to ... yes, that's really it, an active status, to be in a field that means something to you, that corresponds to you, [...] and also to know that you can change things that don't suit you. [...] I need to feel that I can make things happen.

In short, contribution is to bring a personal part to the common history.

Moving from a consumer status to an actor status

To go further on the subject of contribution, the example of Yves, 50, engineer and organiser of a race is very revealing. At the start, Yves was taking part in running races to undertake some sporting activity in order to feel healthy; everything was perfectly organized for him. Gradually, he felt the need to see how these sporting events work from the inside. He became involved in the timing of races, where his computer engineering skills were put to use.

As a rider, we arrive, we place ourselves on the starting line, we run, we shower, we have our rankings, so everything comes magically [...] I wanted to see a bit how it was going on the "other side of the scene".

After some time, Yves ended up being the lead organiser of running race. He thus moved from a consumer status (runner who takes part in a sporting event) to a status of actor who masters several aspects of this race and who can exert his influence on it.

I appreciate, that in everything I do, both professionally and sporty, and that's also why I committed myself a little more, to have a certain control over the activities in which I'm involved.

What Yves mentions appears in the studies on empowerment, particularly those of Le Bossé for whom individuals "try to become the authors and actors of the events that affect them rather than to undergo their consequences" (2003: 42).

VOLUNTEERING AS A LEARNING PROCESS CONTRIBUTING TO AGENCY

Learning outcomes from volunteering are often associated with informal learning, due to the fact that they are not acquired in a training context. Yet it would be wrong to think that these learning outcomes are "only" informal. Several volunteers mentioned continuing education courses that they were able to take in their associative framework. In the same way, volunteers integrate their associative environment with a wealth of professional and personal experiences, but also with outcomes from their formal training. They thus have the opportunity to remobilize, refresh, enrich and even re-interpret their formal knowledge. This fits particularly well with the proposal of Cristol and Muller who temper the idea of a strict distinction between formal and informal learning and rather

speak of "woven knowledge" (2013: 24) and of a "hybridization logic" (ibid: 23), which seems to correspond better to what is being achieved in the voluntary sphere.

Through volunteering,

- Ariane developed an expertise in group animation, undertook a lot of training related to environmental education and built a whole network around the protection of nature that she can use in other contexts
- Yves found a concrete ground in computer science after years spent in a managerial position that had kept him away from practice; this enabled him to remobilize latent capacities and gain credibility amongst his professional team
- Muriel and Julia developed communication skills by having to speak regularly in front of an audience or defend their cause / association to donors; Julia also acquired solid experience in the management of non-profit organizations
- Susana did a free training course in web design during her associative engagement; she was then able to implement it directly in the framework of her volunteer work
- Philippe benefited from his international experience in public health within the framework of an organization for cooperation and development; this enabled him to remobilize, update and enrich his professional expertise
- Gilles, through his political commitment to his commune, had to take responsibility for cases on topics unknown to him, and in this way developed his expertise on specific subjects, such as land use planning
- Laure is now putting into practice what she has learnt in her Human Resources certificate with groups in vulnerable situations; she now knows the official employment and placement structures of her city well

Their commitment allowed them to develop skills in group facilitation, in computer science, in communication, in management, to acquire expertise in specific topics and to develop their networks. These achievements contribute to the development of agency, because these individuals benefit from additional resources that they can use for their own project.

This idea of continuity can be found in the words of Mayen for whom "experience is creative only if it already bears the seeds of the development of future experiences; in other words, if it opens ways to the growth and renewal of experience" (2008: 64). These developments of experiences or resources make it possible to "broaden the scope of possible actions" (Clot & Simonet, 2015: 46) and thus to contribute to the autonomy of individuals. According to Cristol and Muller (2013: 42), "the individual shows through his informal learning the signs of autonomy, the latter being defined as self-regulation". This way, "the seizure of power by oneself and for oneself on one's learning" is a transformation and emancipation (ibid: 43). Therefore, a reinforcement of control over oneself by oneself contributes to an emancipation of control over oneself by others, and this is one of the core characteristics of personal agency definition.

Moreover, these volunteer experiences have strengthened the coherence between the ideals - or values - of these individuals and their practices, thus contributing to their identity reinforcement and to affirmation of their personal ethics.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, I would associate volunteers' itineraries with the definition of capabilities

given by Sen (2010): to be and to do what one values; or, in other words, the possibility of choosing the life you wish to lead. It is about considering values in a broad sense. Indeed, Sen insists on taking into account not only the individual's affordances, but also one's choices, preferences and values in assessing capabilities.

We have seen how voluntary work can develop personal agency, notably in connection with the professional sphere, without possibilities of compensation or reparation. These opportunities allow personal fulfilment and recognition outside paid work.

Volunteering further allows coherence between actions and values, which seems to meet the need for a personal ethics or an important subjective investment that we often observe today. This process is accompanied by a contributory dimension that allows individuals to forge their own historicity (Zask, 2011) by modifying the common.

Thus, among the volunteers interviewed in this study, it is possible to observe personal agency in transformation:

- Susana feels stronger in her volunteer sphere than in the professional one. It is then a revealed agency.
- Ariane and Julia commit to voluntary work in order to implement values that they do not have the opportunity to put into effect in their professional activity; Muriel and Laure provide themselves with the means, notably through their voluntary commitment, to reorient themselves professionally. This is both revealed and developed agency.
- Philippe and Gilles, through their civic commitment, further reinforce values built up during their childhood or youth as well as interests that they already pay attention to in their professional lives; and, finally, Yves finds, through his volunteer commitment, an additional way to take control of several aspects of his life. Their agency is thus strengthened.

If one considers agency as the ability to direct one's life according to one's values and choices, then the voluntary sphere concentrates lots of opportunities to develop it. Volunteering offers possibilities of being an actor, and in this way can be a place for subjective investment, which corresponds to a possible response of the individual to the demands of contemporary society, like being entrepreneurial, active and author of one's own life.

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DIGITAL REDESIGN IN TEACHER TRAINING – CONNECTED LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

The past few decades of educational thinking have maintained an unchallenged drive towards more effective forms of student learning: collaborative, experimental, inquiry-based, problem-based approaches that cite theories of constructionism and situated learning. We must contribute to the policy debates about learning technologies, because outside of the educational field the importance of technology and its capabilities are overplayed. The digitally native students may be able to use the technologies, but that does not mean they can learn from them. They need teachers. Education is about guiding the learning.

Teacher education programs primarily focus on preparing teachers to be successful in their own classroom. In the era of Connected Learning, however, it is critical for the teachers to strive to support students' interest-driven and academically oriented learning across different learning spaces, blurring the boundaries among these spaces.

INTRODUCTION

Information and communication technologies can support and enhance learning. With access to computers and the internet, students can search for information and acquire new knowledge beyond what is available through teachers and textbooks. Moreover, ICT provides students with new ways to practice their skills; prepare a multimedia presentation; program computers; talk and listen to native speakers when learning a second language; whether alone or as part of a remotely connected team. ICT devices bring together traditionally separated education (books, writing, audio recordings, video recordings, databases), thus approaching the range of time and places where learning can take place (*Livingstone, 2011*).

Digital competence has become one of the basic skills in Teacher Education. However, both teacher educators and teachers lack sufficient digital competence to fulfil these ambitious policy goals, and therefore this article suggests how a model of digital competence can bridge the gaps between the intentions in the policy documents and the teachers' / teacher trainers' practice.

More attention must be given to teaching practices, as well as to learning environments that lead to the development of relevant competencies. A focus on innovative pedagogies is needed as most of the competencies stressed cannot be developed through traditional pedagogies and learning environments. This draws our attention also to the question of teacher training.

At the same time, this article attempts to elaborate on our perception of the concept of digital competence in an educational discourse, and how one can define digital competence considering a Hungarian educational perspective. The research question of this article is: how has digital technology been used to improve or reshape interactions between teacher trainers, students, and education authorities? How can digital competence be defined and what are the basics of digital competence in teacher education and in schools, with regard to teacher training in Hungary?

DIGITAL REDESIGN

The professional competences of teachers also includes digital competence, and in the next section, we will examine how information technology and educational methodology have gradually been implemented in teacher training and policy documents. This provides the backdrop for understanding. In Hungary, the concept of competence has occupied a strong position in educational policy documents since the late 1980s. Both in higher education and in schools, we can see that this concept has become more central than the concept of knowledge in policy documents. Other sectors of the economy that were shielded from international competition have been transformed by the rise of online services. And whatever their desired jobs are, when modern students leave school or university, they will most likely search and apply for jobs online. Therefore, a high level of familiarity with digital competencies among the workforce can be a competitive advantage for training. More specifically, education may prepare young people for working in the sectors where new jobs are expected to be created in the coming years. (OECD, 2013a).

The objectives of the instructional unit are set, and teachers must guide students to those objectives with creative, research-based strategies. Good teachers constantly reflect on their practice and use formative assessment to inform instruction (Schön, 1987). Through this, they use their creative skills and their instructional tool-belt to try and innovate in the classroom, all with the focus on engagement and student achievement. Teachers use their knowledge of best practices and of their students to create instructional environments and assessments that meet their needs. Great teachers allow for voice and choice in performance assessments and projects, as well as games and technology. Teachers view the classroom, whether virtual or physical, as a place for possibilities to engage all students.

TEACHER TRAINING GOING DIGITAL

The use of advanced digital technologies can fundamentally alter the way teacher training curricula are created, implemented and evaluated. This has already been happening in the education sector as well as in other sectors in many countries. This article is about the use of the most advanced digital technologies to improve teacher training and governance in education. It is striking that there is much more literature on the use of advanced digital technologies in education. Moreover, it refers surprisingly rarely to the use of these technologies for the improvement of teacher educators' knowledge and educational effectiveness, or the student's workload preparation. Most of the literature is about using the new digital technologies to make learning or classroom work more effective. Indeed, to harness the potential of ICT, teachers and industry must create and develop new educational resources (Frost and Durant, 2013). They may find encouragement and support to do so in changes in related education policies, including curricula, student- and teacher-assessment frameworks, initial teacher training and professional development activities for teachers, as well as in school practices that support collaboration and encourage teachers to take risks and share lessons learned (Harris, 2005; Resnick *et al.*, 2010; Avvisati *et al.*, 2013).

Some of the major problems with current experiments in teacher education are connected to the goal of designing educational environments so that the new types of learning can be introduced successfully. It is essential in the instructor's reflection of the training process to be able to plan and optimize the programme and the learning environment (Schön, 1995). Primary and kindergarten student teachers were generally provided with little support to be able to think about competence and to be able to set learning goals during their high school studies. Problem-based assignments and feedback are used in training to help them to take on responsibilities, so they can develop and form self-regulated learning processes (Savery,

2006). Both teachers and students can benefit from relevant feedback from the learning processes that emphasises the strengths and achievements as well as areas of weaknesses. Systematic constructive feedback can be a tool to increase the success of the teaching-learning process (Duffy, 2013). To design support that creates the educational environment necessary for social changes, teacher training institutions must be able to provide real support along clear guidelines, with conviction to teachers, parents, and communities involved in the development process.

The absence of, or difficulty in accessing, devices and connecting them to the internet is certainly a barrier for integrating digital competencies in teaching and learning (Tondeur *et al.*, 2012).

Teachers arrange learning environments to be effective, and these learning opportunities must be recognised by the student. This is particularly important if students are to go beyond habituation learning and try to develop skills that they can confidently apply in new contexts as well. The instructional quality is difficult to measure, as existing evidence suggests that there is no one best way of teaching. According to the literature on educational effectiveness, several classroom variables appear to be related to better instructional quality and learning outcomes (OECD, 2013c).

There is a long debate about the inability of teacher training programs to use digital technology in their professional practice.

This could provide teachers with new approaches to knowledge and learning, but presumes that systematic planning, tutoring pupils, differentiation models and school-home cooperation will all contribute towards capturing pupils' aptitudes and needs within the framework of a community of practice. For the first time in history, it is possible to evaluate, utilise and challenge the digital competence of students as an entry point to the new learning strategies in Hungarian schools. This implies a significant pedagogical potential, but this potential cannot be fulfilled without a digitally competent teacher who knows how to utilise digital competencies in educational settings. There is a need to identify the digitally competent teachers who can maintain a clear goal in their pedagogical work in these kinds of learning environments and who can realise that these competence objectives can be reached by means of very different learning strategies among students. There has to be symbiosis between the elevated status of the digital competencies in the curriculum, teachers' digital competence and a set of digital learning resources. At the same time, this shows the complexity of the digital competence that every teacher must deal with in our digitised schools, and it goes without saying that teachers need time to achieve this digital competence.

As a summary of this model of digital competence, one can see how important it is that educational learning outcomes and digital competence 'merge together' in order for the teachers to exploit new trends in the digitised schools of today, considering new teacher training, curricula, and policy documents. Teachers increasingly integrate digital competencies into their lessons over time. This consists of a process of adoption, adaptation, appropriation, and innovation. For their students, teachers develop an explicit part of the knowing and awareness, tacit knowledge, acquired throughout this process. In the first part of this process, teachers are getting comfortable with basic ICT skills. In this aspect, the teachers can develop both pedagogical and didactic innovations by using ICT in teaching in a creative approach, which also implies their ability to redesign and develop digital competencies.

THE NATIONAL DIGITAL EDUCATION STRATEGY

Hungary has adopted a national Digital Education Strategy. The focus of this strategy is the development of digital skills in the varied subsystems of the education system. This has been developed with a key input from the sectoral association of IT companies, and it was formally adopted by the government in 2016. The strategy builds on several previous developments. In fact, since the beginning of the last decade, several large data collection systems, databases, and data management systems have been created. Several key developments have supported the creation and the development of these systems. The Digital Pedagogy Methodology Centre (DPMK) in Budapest has set out to establish a baseline framework to support the new digital era in teacher training programmes.

The Working Groups are cross-professional networks operated by the DPMK to support the implementation of community beliefs and to provide an input to the development of new policies. They are composed of government delegates from member states and of relevant stakeholder group representatives. The mandate of the DPMK on schools covers teacher related areas as well, including teacher education which makes its activity highly relevant for the educational community. The new 21st-century infrastructure enhanced information communication, education-related development projects supported cost-effectiveness, and improvement of working conditions promoted efficiency at work.

The education sector recognised that without an organisational development that is based on the concept of adaptive and effective learning, some of the work that they invested in the process could be just tilting at windmills. Caring for capable students, being able to develop an ever better and more supportive environment is inconceivable without the involvement of digital competencies and the students (Hennessy, 2013).

The real question is not whether we need complex thinking about digital development but what the most optimal solutions would be, taking the given circumstances into consideration. How to create an institutional environment that is capable of effectively supporting common thinking amidst differing cultural and professional specialized traditions?

Several features of ICT support teachers in giving adaptive feedback to students and, more generally, individualising instruction. They support student-oriented and formative assessment behaviours in teachers' classroom practice. They also facilitate collaborative projects and enable teachers to extend the spatial and temporal boundaries of their lessons, thus creating the potential for cognitively challenging and engaging activities. In contrast, teachers cannot expect computers to be much help in managing the classroom or in certain structuring practices.

Understanding school education as a learning system directly responds to the challenges of complexity and improvement as it is based on collaboration and communication between horizontal and vertical connections. Horizontal connections may be between regions, between schools, or between a school and the wider community. They may be based on formal or more informal arrangements. Vertical connections are often hierarchical, such as between a school and the inspectorate. There are degrees of authority in these relationships, the level of which can influence how the work is initiated and carried out.

CONNECTED LEARNING IN TEACHER TRAINING

Discussion on digital competencies focuses too much on the individual teacher and not enough on collaboration. We should pay more attention to assessing teachers not only as individuals but also as a team. If we focus too much on the individual, we support the model of competing individuals instead of the team model of teaching. Familiarity with learning

theories, diverse learning strategies, and cultural interactions should be an essential part of high-quality educational work. By increasingly participating in the restructuring and revival of cultures, and being aware of learning environments outside of our own, we gain a more complex picture of the world around us (Wiley, 2000).

A collaborative decision-making process means engaging the trust of, and supporting a dialogue between, a range of stakeholders at all levels of the system, and fostering a sense of ownership, responsibility, and accountability. Schools should be the learning organisations that support effective digital competence centres and become contexts for a process of inquiry and continuous development at a local level (Horn, 2010).

The discourse about the role of educational institutions became increasingly intensive in the early nineties. Barr and Tagg (1995) analyse the practice of higher education, which they named the “instruction paradigm”. In this practice, the teacher is in the middle of the process and shares their knowledge in the form of fifty-minute lectures. The responsibility for learning the given material lies with the learner, but their efficiency is secondary; the key point is the teacher’s instructional effectiveness. The system is constructed according to autonomous scientific disciplines in this system; “knowledge bases” appear separate from each other (the organizational system of the University of Humboldt is an example).

The planning of instruction, the organization and control of its process is much simpler than influencing the complex process of learning. The teacher's task is much more complicated in this case, because they must have a concept about what pre-existing knowledge the learners possess; what is it that they can build upon; how learning happens in the individual learner; what the learner can use that knowledge for; and having the given knowledge in their possession, what will they be able to implement.

In their article, O’Neil and McMahon (2005) refer to Kember (1997) and describe how they see this change mainly in that learning comes about in the learner, the teacher’s role is that of facilitation and promotion of change rather than sharing knowledge. They quote Burnard (1999) in further parts of their article, who suggested that research was required into how learners not only know what they want to learn but also how and why they want to learn it. This concept underlines the choice of options for learners during the process of learning. Education and continuous learning have related to curricular theory for a long time.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Organisations are under constant pressure to innovate, and this does not always allow enough time for users to adequately join and stay within the development process. To avoid this, organisations should themselves identify problems and design adaptive solutions. Developments gave rise to programmes created by a professional community which conformed to the educational competence models and met training requirements. Enhancing and enriching methodological culture and organisational development training aimed at promoting awareness were based on the principle of coexistence and acceptance. The workshops were aimed at identifying service components’ areas of cooperation, while in other areas (for example, in liaising with workplaces) the goal was to develop methods that could be directly implemented in practice. The organisational development efforts have resulted in the renewal of educational work and have deepened work in certain fields of education.

This new way of curriculum redesign with close cooperation with students seeks to address the latter challenge, and not only support students with basic learning and competency in their given field but provide guidance in forming individualized goals that will facilitate working more effectively and being motivated at the university.

One of the programme's primary purposes is to develop and test methods for using the learning environment in an educated and conscious way.

Due to changes in the functions expected from the educational system, we are faced with the learner- or learning-centred curricular paradigm more and more frequently. There is, however, no consensus about the interpretation of this concept. Some identify it with active learning, while some strive towards a much more generic definition: it not only includes active learning, but also the possibility of choice in learning and a certain power shift in the relationship of teachers and learners. It all remains on the level of theory in most cases; we can see just rare examples of practical applications.

While there is criticism, the most common opinion is that by putting the learner into focus, we can come closer to making the learner able to decide what kind of knowledge they need, and in which form they want to acquire that knowledge. There is less waste of human and educational resources that were previously used to teach students things that they either already knew or were not at all interested in. However, it should also be considered that this is not an easy process and we can only hope that we can, in this process of iteration, provide evidence and a theoretical background for the organization of education that is even more learner-centered (Yoon et al, 2005; Romiszowszky, 2016).

We use many terms to describe the everyday work of teachers. From a curriculum designer to a facilitator of classroom work, there are many roles that teachers take on in the class. There are many highly standardized curricula and guides, and teachers are told exactly how to teach, rather than being empowered to differentiate instruction and create engaging learning environments to meet the needs of their students. Many teachers have been pushed into a role where they are not being utilized for their expertise and skills. Teachers need to be empowered with a variety of instructional design skills to meet the needs of all students, and to become more of a learning designer. Teaching is becoming a design profession now, or even a design science. "Teaching is now a design science. Like other design professionals - architects, engineers, programmers - teachers must work out creative and evidence-based ways of improving what they do" (Laurillard, 2016).

Teachers need to be recognised for their knowledge and ability to create engaging and motivating learning environments. I believe there are no simple terms that encapsulate and redesign the teachers' work.

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DEVELOPMENT AND TRIAL OF A BLENDED LEARNING CONCEPT FOR STUDENTS IN ENGINEERING STUDY COURSES

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides an overview of digital learning elements used in academic teaching and summarizes the current state of research concerning the utilization of digital learning elements at German universities. It demonstrates that the blended learning approach compared to other e-learning approaches proved best and is widely administered (cf. Schmid et al., 2017; Wannemacher, 2016). As a result, the blended learning approach has been selected for the present research project.

The main part of the paper describes the experience of developing a blended learning concept from a practical perspective. A flipped classroom concept was developed for “point kinematics,” a part of the module called “technical mechanics” for a bachelor’s mechanical engineering study course with two self-learning (e-learning) phases and two in-class phases.

In addition, a comparative group study examines the effectiveness of the designed blended learning course. Two groups have been compared. One group attended a traditional in-class lecture, and for the other group, the blended learning course was implemented. The results of the analyses show that the group in the blended learning scenario as opposed to the traditional learners had significantly improved from the prior-knowledge test to the final exam.

INTRODUCTION

In view of the increasing number of students, the growing heterogeneity of students, internationalization and the increasing competition at German universities, it can be argued that digitalization could help to address these challenges (cf. Albrecht and Revermann, 2016; Schmid et al., 2017).

Digitalization is a current topic in higher education because of the increasing networking in the last years and the simplified access to the digital world via mobile devices. The pressure to keep pace with developments in other industrialized countries has intensified in Germany. Facing a growing number of students, universities are challenged to ensure the quality of their lectures and to counteract the overstraining of teachers as well as the limited premises. The large number of applicants and the variety of university entrance qualifications lead to growing heterogeneity in student groups. This situation results in individual learning needs which have to be taken into account, depending on the biographical conditions (cf. Jürgens, 2017).

Furthermore, because of the increasing competition in the private higher education sector and the expanding portfolio of foreign universities, it seems necessary for state universities in Germany to take advantage of the opportunities offered by digital media. The development of new teaching concepts with digital media could be a chance to address these challenges.

The key question of this research is whether the support of teaching with e-learning elements and the didactic preparation of the contents within a blended learning scenario

leads to a better understanding of the topic and, accordingly, better results for students than teaching without e-learning elements.

STATE OF RESEARCH AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Digital teaching and learning at German universities

Digital presentation tools followed by digital texts and the common office programmes are widely used by students in university courses (Schmid et al., 2017). In their private lives, students use Wikipedia or wikis and videos. Schmid et al. revealed that a mixture of online and attendance phases and inverted classroom formats for seminar preparation are favored by students.

In his research, Wannemacher (2017) illustrates that lecturers mainly use classical teaching and learning materials, as well as videos, presentation tools or a whiteboard to impart knowledge (cf. *ibid.*, p. 21). He acknowledges social and collaborative learning with digital media as particularly crucial for the didactic design. However, he argues that special didactic concepts for digital learning are still missing. University management discerns opportunities in the use of digital learning media that can help to master certain challenges, such as strengthening individualized learning, coping with the growing number of students and dealing with the heterogeneity of students. The management assumes that digital media can also contribute to the inclusion of students and the monitoring and analysis of learning success (cf. *ibid.*, p. 25). In terms of the challenges and difficulties in the context of digital learning at the university, the lecturers' first priority are legal issues (rights of use; copyright; data protection). These issues represent a major challenge for both teachers and universities, because there are still no comprehensive legal regulations for their use in Germany. The intense effort necessary for designing and producing digital learning material and the question of crediting the work in the teaching budget is the second challenge (Wannemacher, 2017).

Persike and Friedrich have also found that the use of digital media varies greatly between subjects (cf. Persike and Friedrich, 2016, p. 7). Schmid stated that, until now, merely isolated solutions exist at German universities, and only a few have a comprehensive cross-university strategy for the digitalization of teaching (cf. Schmid et al., 2017, p. 28).

Lochner states that the blended learning approach has now established itself. In his opinion, it is undisputed that "a pedagogically–didactically meaningful concept is decisive for the success of a (partially) digitized course" (Lochner et al., 2017, p. 144).

Learning success with digital media

Greller *et al.* have compiled international comparative studies on the performance of students with online and face-to-face teaching (e.g., Piccoli *et al.*, 2001; Skylar *et al.*, 2005; LaMeres and Plumb, 2014). They conclude that the results may vary depending on the context, because it is not clear how the embedding and didactic design of the examined online parts are constructed (Greller *et al.*, 2017). Ledermüller and Fallmann have identified essential factors from educational psychology that have an influence on learning effectiveness: previous knowledge, time invested in the learning process and repetition of effort in solving problems. Self-regulated learning ability shows no significant influence on test performance, which is surprising, because e-learning is usually highly self-directed (cf. Ledermüller and Fallmann, 2017, p. 81). They conclude that the use of digital media in the classroom makes it possible to respond more flexibly to different types of learning.

Moreover, Kulik *et al.* demonstrate in their meta-analysis that computer-based teaching promises higher learning success than traditional teaching with the effect strength of $d = .35$ ¹ in favor of computer-assisted teaching (Kulik *et al.*, 1986). Nevertheless, the advantage of e-learning shows a minor effect. Kerres displays an effect for adult continuing education when computer-assisted learning is combined with conventional teaching, as opposed to “the use of computers alone.” The effect strength of $d = .42$ has reached a moderate value (cf. *ibid.*). Kerres points out that learning success is independent of the media system used; whether media-based learning has a favorable or unfavorable effect on learning success depends on moderator variables such as acceptance, self-learning skills and dropout rates (cf. Kerres, 2003, p. 6).

In summary, the results can vary depending on the context and the didactic design of the online elements. Having an influence on learning effectiveness are previous knowledge (Nickolaus and Abele; Ledermüller and Fallmann, 2017); the time invested in the learning process (Kerres, 2011); and certain learning strategies that are considered important for self-directed digital learning (Ledermüller and Fallmann, 2017).

Flipped classroom concept

Blended learning is a combination of classroom learning and learning with digital media. However, there is a disagreement in the literature about the percentage share of face-to-face elements and online elements (cf. Kerres, 2011; Wannemacher, 2016). Wannemacher distinguishes three scenarios for the distribution: 1. *Enrichment*: Already existing face-to-face lectures will be enriched with digital elements, without making any major adjustments to the existing structures. 2. *Integration*: Blended learning approaches in which the in-class and online components complement each other. 3. *Online learning*: These scenarios have little or no in-class phases.

The *inverted classroom* or *flipped classroom* is a didactic model for blended learning courses. The method is administered through self-learning materials - for example, via PDFs, e-lectures or instructional videos and podcasts. In the face-to-face section, the content learned through self-study is reinforced by the teacher and increased through exercises. The flipped classroom teacher is no longer the agent of the lecture contents but supports the students in the self-controlled learning processes. An advantage of the flipped classroom is, on the one hand, the individualization of the learning processes, which offers students the possibility to learn, record and repeat content at their own pace. On the other hand, the clear separation of teaching and the deepening of knowledge, as well as reflection in the online and in-class phases, can be beneficial.

DEVELOPMENT AND TRIAL OF A BLENDED LEARNING CONCEPT

For the research project, a lecture from the basic studies of an engineering course at a university of applied sciences was selected. The lecture on *technical mechanics* is regarded as a core subject of engineering studies (cf., e.g., Behrendt *et al.*, 2015). At the test university, this lecture is a traditional classroom face-to-face lecture with individual and group exercises. The professor provides the students with a script in PDF format, in which the theory of the topic is described in detail and supplemented with sample calculations and examples for a better understanding. Approximately 60 to 70 students participate in this lecture per semester.

¹ Cohen designates an effect of $d = 0.2$ as small, $d = 0.5$ as a mean effect and $d = 0.8$ as a large effect (Cohen, 1988).

Development of the learning scenario

Because the lecturer has little time to discuss exercises during the lecture, given such a large group, or to respond to individual, weaker students, the flipped classroom concept has been chosen. It is intended primarily to help weaker students better understand the content, and to supply the lecturer with more time to explain the solution strategies of the sample calculations in class.

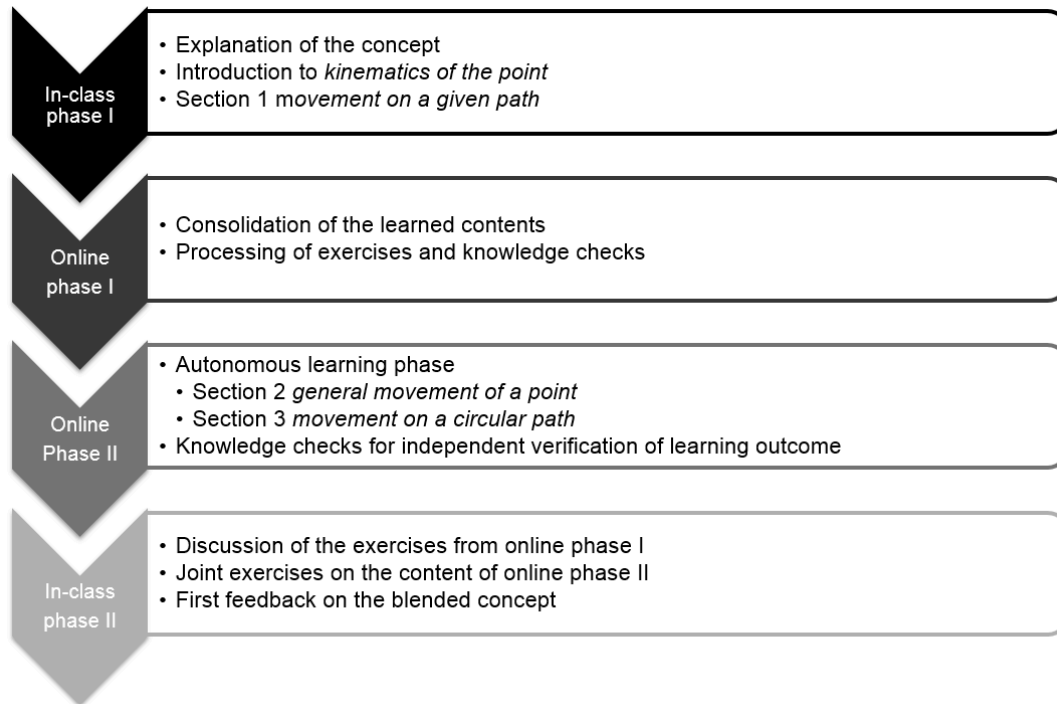


Figure 1: Visualization of the developed concept

Figure 1 visualises the designed learning scenario. After reviewing the existing learning materials of the lecture, three sections were selected for implementation in a blended learning concept: Section 1: *movement on a given path*; Section 2: *general movement of a point*; and Section 3: *movement on a circular path*.

The first in-class phase is about introducing the students to the learning concept and the topic of the lesson. The lecturer gives a face-to-face lesson to the students of Section 1 (as seen in Figure 1). The script was used as a basis for creating the materials for the online phases by using the software Articulate. In the Online Phase 1, the learned contents from the In-class Phase 1 should be intensified by processing exercises and knowledge checks. The aim is to provide learning outcome assessments based on quiz questions for learners, and the provision of assistance for difficult topics. Various exercises and case studies are incorporated to enable explorative learning and problem-oriented learning. The division of the knowledge elements into small subareas should enable the learners to return to the subject matter at any time without any problems. Opportunities for an exchange with the

lecturers (via forums) and fellow students (via chats) are to be provided in the learning setting.

Based on the findings in Chapter 1.2, the design and the concept of the learning environment, as well as the embedding in the lecture, were especially considered for development.

Furthermore, the following methods were implemented in the e-learning sections: *direct instruction* (review, presentation, guided practice, corrections and feedback, and independent practice) in order to deepen the learned contents; and *induction and deduction* (abstract information is presented, and concrete examples promote abstract thinking; learners are encouraged to be active). This method was used to convey theoretical contents (cf. Kerres, 2011). One of the core elements in the creation of the learning content was the division of the content into small, independent learning sections, with individual feedback on their learning progress for the learners, and close guidance of the learners through the course unit. A key insight learned during the development was to bundle the contents into small packages, because of the expected short attention span of the students; one unit lasts a maximum of 45 minutes. In our experience, to fill an e-learning course with content for 45 minutes, at least two to three working days are needed to transform the content of a given structure with Articulate.

An overview or a preview of the learning contents and connections is represented graphically, so that the learner can always follow at which point of the learning unit he or she is. For the face-to-face lectures, as well as the e-learning parts, the lecturer always maintains an advisory position.

To summarize the development phase, much time has to be invested in the entire development and implementation of the content, and multiple hours are required to transform the classic lecture into a flipped classroom lecture. The majority of lecturers are most likely not able to spend this amount of time to transfer their lecture contents into a flipped classroom concept. Therefore, the conclusion can be drawn that an expert is needed for the implementation of the contents and the design of the overall concept.

Experimental study

Study design and sample

The aim of the study is to investigate whether students taught with a didactically embedded blended learning concept achieve better exam results than students who are taught in the traditional way. The data on which the quantitative study is based was collected at Aalen University between December 2016 and July 2017.

Before the lecture started, the prior knowledge of the students was examined, and at the end of the lecture, the acquired knowledge was tested with an exam. The prior-knowledge test consists of 12 test questions or, instead, 18 items from the validated test: “KoM@ING Survey of Physical – Technical Competence at the Beginning of Studies” (cf. Behrendt et al., 2015). In total, up to 21 points can be achieved in the abridged test used for the present study. The test questions were selected by the lecturer. A total of $n = 109$ students participated in the survey. The sample was a complete survey of engineering students who had to take this course at Aalen University. The first group consists of $n = 63$ students from full-time courses. All respondents from this group attended the lecture on technical mechanics without a blended learning concept (this group is hereinafter referred to as *Group 1 without tool*). The second group consists of a total of $n = 46$ students. These students learned the contents with the developed blended learning concept (this group is hereinafter referred to as *Group 2 with tool*). A classic comparison group design is used, consisting of two groups and two measurement points.

Table 1: Sample description

| | Group 1 without tool <i>n</i> = 63 | Group 2 with tool <i>n</i> = 46 |
|---|--|---|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 75.4% | 58.7% |
| Female | 24.6% | 41.3% |
| University entrance | | |
| Abitur | 61.3% | 42.2% |
| Fachhochschulreife | 33.9% | 40% |
| Professionally qualified | 4.8% | 17.8% |
| Average university entrance qualification grade | M 2.6, SD .60 | M 2.8, SD .65 |
| Study form | | |
| | n = 62 | n = 46 |
| Full-time | 100% | 58.7% |
| Part-time | 0% | 41.3% |

Table 1 shows the descriptive findings of the two comparison groups. Group 2 with the tool has an average of 2.8 in the university entrance qualification examination, while Group 1 scores slightly better with an average of 2.6. Furthermore, 36.4% of the total group have passed the university entrance qualification examination (Abitur), 36.4% have completed a Fachhochschulreife and 25.3% are professionally qualified persons. The majority (81.7%) are full-time students.

Results

A comparison of means of the prior-knowledge test demonstrates that Group 2 achieves 7.5, whereas Group 1 achieves 10.4. Group 2 has comparably less previous knowledge than Group 1. The difference between the two groups is highly significant. The group without the tool has a higher level of prior knowledge.

Table 2: Comparison of means in entrance examination

| | | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>p</i> |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Prior-knowledge test | Group 1 (<i>without tool</i>) | 63 | 10.4 | 4.4 | < .001 |
| | Group 2 (<i>with tool</i>) | 45 | 7.5 | 4.2 | |

Notation. K–S-test significant (no normal distribution); total score: 21 points

In the comparison of means of the point kinematics exam (Table 3), it can be seen that the mean value of Group 2 is 0.61 higher than in the group without the tool. The Mann–Whitney U test showed no significant difference between the two groups.

Table 3: Comparison of means in the final exam

| | | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>p</i> |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Exam point kinematics | Group 1 (<i>without tool</i>) | 43 | 2.88 | 2.42 | n.s. |
| | Group 2 (<i>with tool</i>) | 36 | 3.49 | 3.66 | |

Notation. K–S-test significant (no normal distribution); total score: 12 points

In the mean value comparison of the point kinematics exam task (Table 3), it can be seen that the mean of Group 2 is 0.61 higher than in the group without the tool. There are no significant differences in the exam results.

In order to evaluate whether the individual learning increase is statistically significant, the difference of the percentage level of achievement is determined. The Mann–Whitney U test shows a high significance with .002. Group 2 has improved by 31% from the prior-knowledge test to the exam results.

SUMMARY

The research illustrates that the students (Group 2) who learned with the blended learning scenario have improved significantly compared to the group with the traditional in-class concept. Although Group 2 demonstrated significantly poorer previous knowledge in the entrance test, the students managed to compensate for this deficit. The central question as to whether the students are able to understand the topic better by having lessons with the developed blended-learning concept can be confirmed by the results.

It is unclear to what extent the blended learning tool itself has led to the improvement of Group 2, because the lecture design of Group 1 provides many self-study exercises. It is most likely that the success of Group 2 could also have to do with the fact that the material has been didactically processed and structured by an expert. Especially for weaker students with less previous knowledge, professors who are giving traditional lectures may introduce topics at too high a level, whereas the preparation of the materials by a didactics expert in combination with the professional expertise could help explain complicated topics in a more understandable manner. This leads to the recommendation that, for a successful digital teaching and learning concept at universities, teachers must be supported with the expertise of experts in didactics and in digitalization of learning content to develop successful concepts. The frequently integrated learning success checks in the blended concept, the small learning units and the appealing design and processing of the teaching content could also have been beneficial for learning success.

Another challenge is that various concepts of blended learning and e-learning are outlined in the literature, and the application and implementation are regarded as important, but there are barely any indications of the details for the implementation and the possibilities in connection with didactic concepts. Here, too, there still seems to be a great need for research. There should be some kind of guidelines for the implementation of digital learning that describes in detail the procedure and the possibilities, from the conception of a didactic concept to which technology is best suited for which setting, and how digital content can be created and what can be achieved with it - and, above all, how these online elements can be interlinked with face-to-face lectures.

In summary, the following conclusions can be drawn from the present work: for the created blended learning concept, success can be recorded on the basis of the statistical results. The problem of overcrowded lectures in basic subjects described above can indeed be counteracted by a well-developed blended learning concept. Students can be flexible about learning, and there is more time in class to concentrate on the transfer of content or for exercises. Especially for heterogeneous student groups, a blended learning format can be helpful to be able to better respond to the different learning speeds and knowledge levels.

All in all, the success of a blended learning concept stands or falls with the preparation of the content and the didactic concept, regardless of which digital media are used. The biggest obstacle to widespread use continues to be the intense effort required to create the online learning materials.

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ENGAGING STUDENTS LEARNING WITH VIDEOS (IN FURTHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES) MORE ACTIVELY

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BACKGROUND

Public tender “Partnership of regions and universities” (“Partnerschaft Hochschule und Region”)

In 2015 the Bavarian State Ministry of Education, Science and the Arts started a public tender process for all Bavarian universities including universities of applied sciences. The aim was to promote ideas and concepts in order to expand academic learning in rural / non-metropolitan areas of Bavaria. In order to gain public funding the following criteria needed to be matched by the applying universities:

- concepts have to include new course(s) of study
- learning takes place off-site at extramural places of learning in rural / non-metropolitan areas and / or online
- socialisation of the students within an academic environment, although they are (partly) studying at extramural places of learning

Project “Digitales-Studieren.Bayern”

As one of five, the joint proposal of the Landshut University of Applied Sciences and Munich University of Applied Sciences was accepted and set up as a project by the end of 2015. The aim of this joint project, named “Digitales-Studieren.Bayern”, is to develop and to offer the further education programme “Engineering and Management Energy & Logistics” in Lower Bavaria.

Cooperation

Both universities, the Landshut University of Applied Sciences (LUAS) and the Munich University of Applied Sciences (MUAS) are responsible for different remits of the project. LUAS assumes the function of the provider of the programme and is responsible for organisational issues, such as promoting the programme, study advisory service, matriculation of the students, etc. Furthermore, it is responsible for building up and maintaining technical infrastructure which includes a video studio, where educational videos are produced, a streaming server to provide these videos to the students and the (technical) equipping of the extramural places of learning.

The Munich University of Applied Sciences provides counselling services in the field of media didactics that help lecturers to set up online and blended learning courses. The

counselling includes topics like didactic methods, communication and collaboration in online and blended learning scenarios, formative assessments. In addition to that the Munich University of Applied Sciences does scientific monitoring and develops a scientifically validated communication concept on learning and teaching at extramural places of learning. Furthermore, training on using Moodle tests and using the LaTeX environment within Moodle is given. The Munich University of Applied Sciences also provides conceptual work on summative and formative electronic assessment. Besides counselling services and conceptual work, tests for formative assessment are set up on Moodle.

Target group

The target group of this further education programme is (self-) employed and needs to deal with a number of requirements and expectations. Besides employment, students have to deal with expectations in their private lives, and the expectations of their lecturers in order to perform adequately academically and to pass their exams. In addition to these, caring for family etc. may consume a relevant amount of (learning) time. In order to address the specific needs of this target group the overall learning concept of this course of study focuses on online and blended learning scenarios, accompanied by face-to-face seminars and practical laboratory courses.

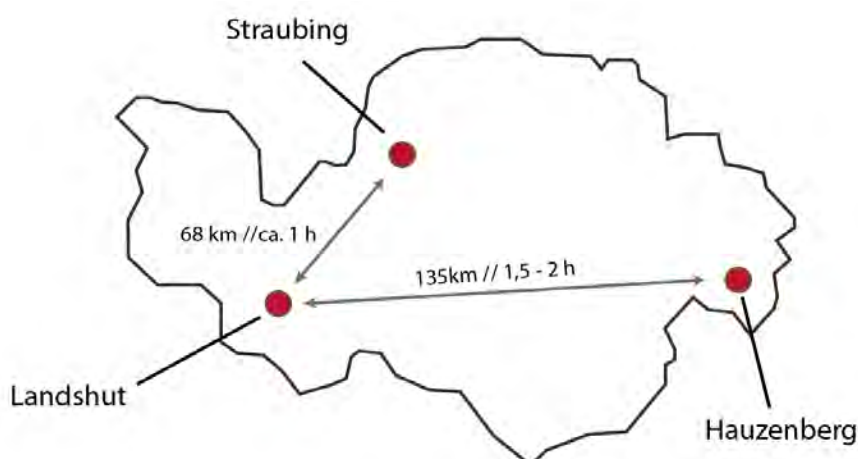


Figure 1: Location of the two extramural places of learning at Straubing and Hauzenberg and the distance to the LUAS campus.

DIDACTIC CONCEPT

In order to provide flexibility to the students most of the courses are designed with a blended learning approach. Blended learning combines 'traditional' classroom learning experience with online self-study phases in which students are learning independently with learning materials, and have control over the time, place and path of their learning to some extent (Norm Friesen, 2012). Furthermore, some of the courses are designed with a flipped-classroom approach. According to Abeysekera & Dawson (2015) flipped-classroom is a pedagogical set that needs to match the following criteria:

- 1) move most information-transmission teaching out of class
- 2) use class time for learning activities that are active and social, and

- 3) require students to complete pre- and/or post-class activities to fully benefit from in-class work.”

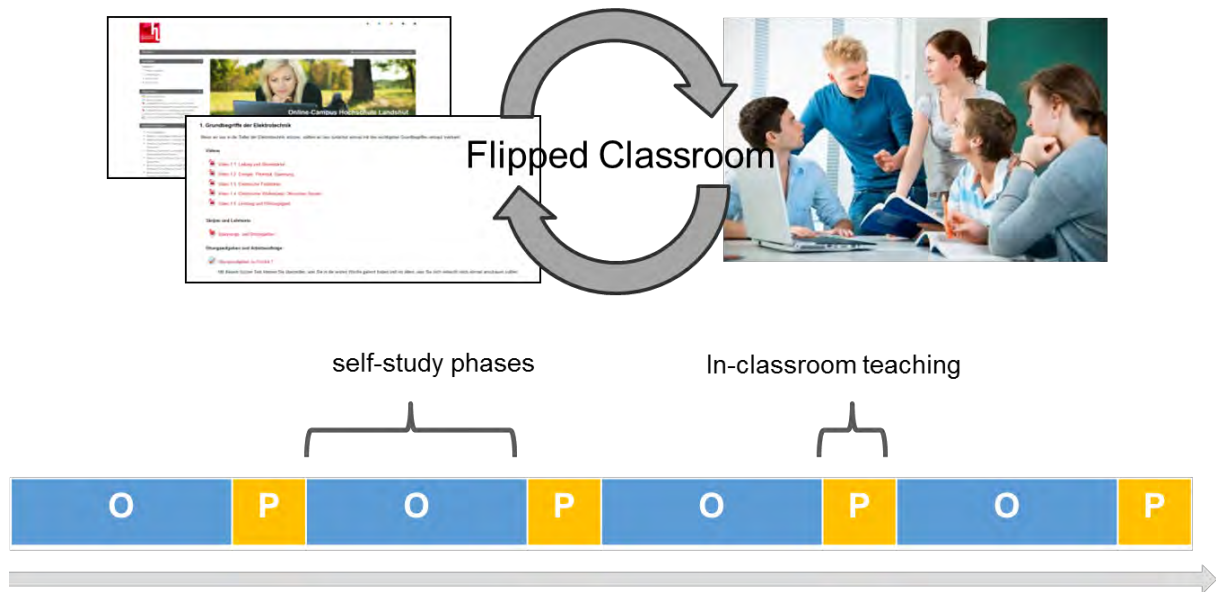


Figure 2: Sequence of a course designed with a flipped-classroom approach.

Self-study phases online

During the online phases students are learning with educational videos, lectures notes, scientific articles and formative online self-assessments in order to prepare for class. Although the students are learning independently within these self-study phases they need to become familiar with the academic culture. This kind of socialisation within an academic environment will not only take place at the extramural places of learning, but also during the online phases, e.g. by including discussions on the scientific subjects presented in the learning materials.

Frage 1
Bisher nicht beantwortet
Erreichbare Punkte: 1,00

Die Funktion $y_1 = x^3 - 2x^2 - x + 16$ soll so in x-Richtung verschoben werden, dass sie die Funktion $y_2 = -x^3 + 12x + 6$ in deren Maximum schneidet.
Welche der folgenden Funktionen ist die verschobene Funktion y_3 ?
Es können auch mehrere Lösungen zutreffen.

Wählen Sie eine oder mehrere Antworten:

- ☐ $y_3 = (x-1)^3 - 2(x-1)^2 - (x-1) + 16$
- ☐ $y_3 = x^3 - x^2 + 2x - 14$
- ☐ $y_3 = (x+1)^3 + 2(x+1)^2 + (x+1) - 16$
- ☐ $y_3 = x^3 + x^2 - 2x + 14$
- ☐ $y_3 = (x+1)^3 - 2(x+1)^2 - (x+1) + 16$

Frage 1
Bisher nicht beantwortet
Erreichbare Punkte: 4,00

Bestimmen Sie ein möglichst einfaches Interpolationspolynom der Form $y = ax^3 + bx^2 + cx + d$, das durch die Punkte $P_1(-1|2)$, $P_2(1|10)$, $P_3(5|-10)$ verläuft.
Geben Sie das Ergebnis auf drei Nachkommastellen gerundet an.

$a =$ $b =$ $c =$ $d =$

Vektorrechnung
Ingenieurmathematik I
Kapitel 1.5 Vektorrechnung
Prof. Dr. Michaela Gruber
0:00 36:25

Figure 3: Examples of learning materials used in self-study phases.

ENGAGING STUDENTS LEARNING WITH VIDEOS MORE ACTIVELY

In order to engage students more actively while they are watching educational videos a video player that allows timestamped comments is about to be implemented in the further education programme “Engineering and Management Energy & Logistics”. In the following different didactical scenarios to engage students will be described.

Take notes and get into discussions

Students watching an educational video are able to save comments like notes, ideas and thoughts that come up while watching the video. These comments are saved to the specific timestamp and will be shown every time the timestamp is passed when the video is watched. All comments are only visible to and can only be edited by the author by default, but can be shared with fellow students that also have access to the video. This allows students to provide their thoughts and questions to their fellow students or a tutor or the lecturer. That means comments can be shared with a specific person or with a group for a targeted distribution of thoughts and questions. Recipients are able to respond with text, symbols and drawings, which may serve as a starting point for further discussions on the topic presented on the specific timestamp.

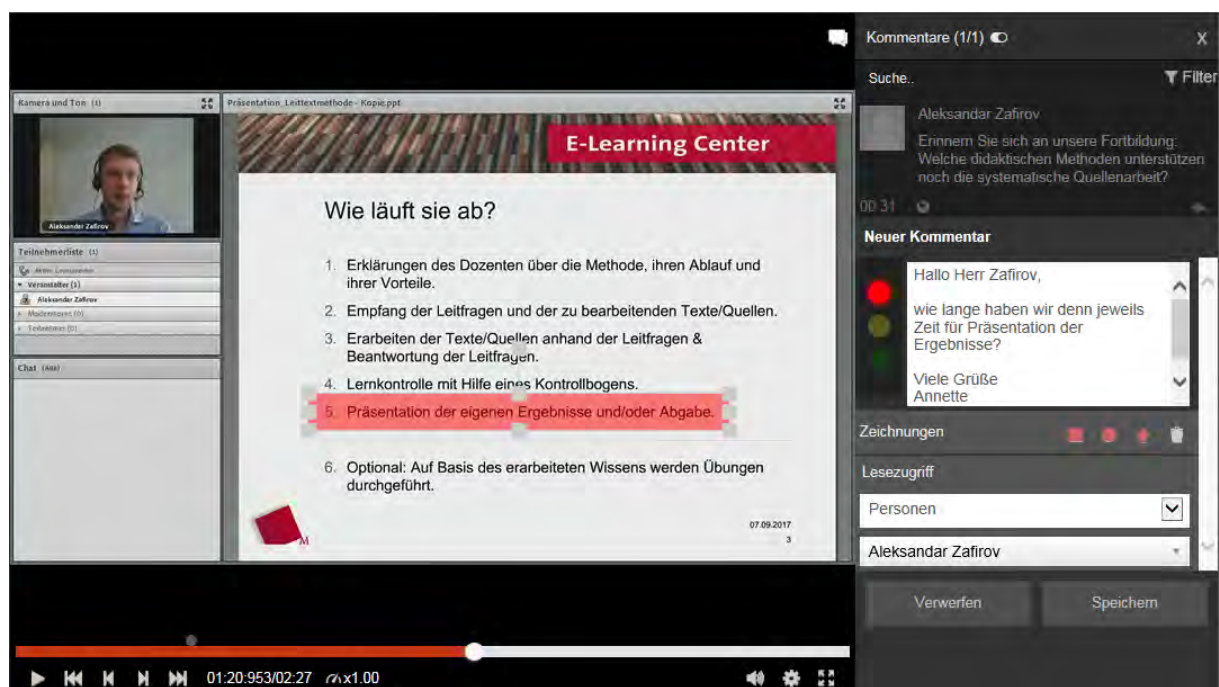


Figure 4: Timestamp based comment with drawing (only accessible by the author).

Guide students' attention

Lecturers have the possibility to integrate cues and questions which appear during the video and are shown to the students. Cues and questions guide the student's attention and lead them to observe the content in more detail.

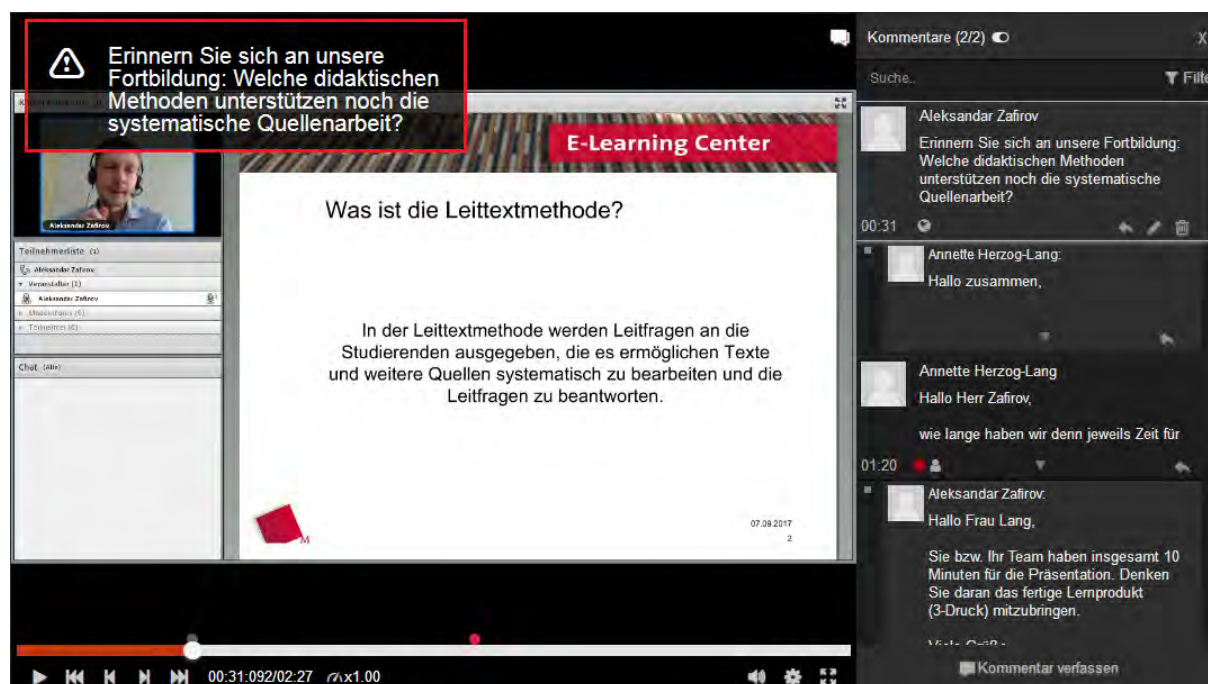


Figure 5: Example of providing a cue (bordered red) for students' guidance.

Explanation on Fig. 5: The given question students should answer is: "Remember the visited training: which didactic methods support learners in the systematic source work?" The given question engages students to remember, collect and share what they had learned before.

The lecturers are also able to respond on students' answers, e.g. in order to go into deeper discussion on that topic.

Furthermore, lecturers can provide links to scientific articles, exercises and formative assessments related to the topic presented in a specific section of the video. Lecturers are able to control how many seconds these cues or questions are shown, and whether the video should stop for a couple of seconds to ensure students are able to read the given information carefully.

Feedback - deal out and deal with criticism

Another didactic scenario in which timestamped comments may support students learning can be described as "reflection on (their own) learning products". In this case, learning processes and products like mathematical operations and their result(s), or speeches and presentations, are recorded and presented to lecturers and fellow-students in order to get feedback on their working / learning processes and their learning outcomes.

This scenario will also foster the mandatory criteria "socialization of the students within an academic environment" set down by the Bavarian State Ministry of Education, Science and the Arts in an online learning environment, because before fellow-students can observe and interpret the presented learning product, and give comprehensive feedback at a scientific level, they must know the topic well themselves. According to Altrichter (2000) getting feedback with temporal distance to a learning situation allows learners to analyse and reflect on their learning, and to discover other ways of conduct. Thinking of ways of how to deal

with topic-related problems in the future will help learners to prepare for such situations on a behavioural level, according to Neuweg (1999).

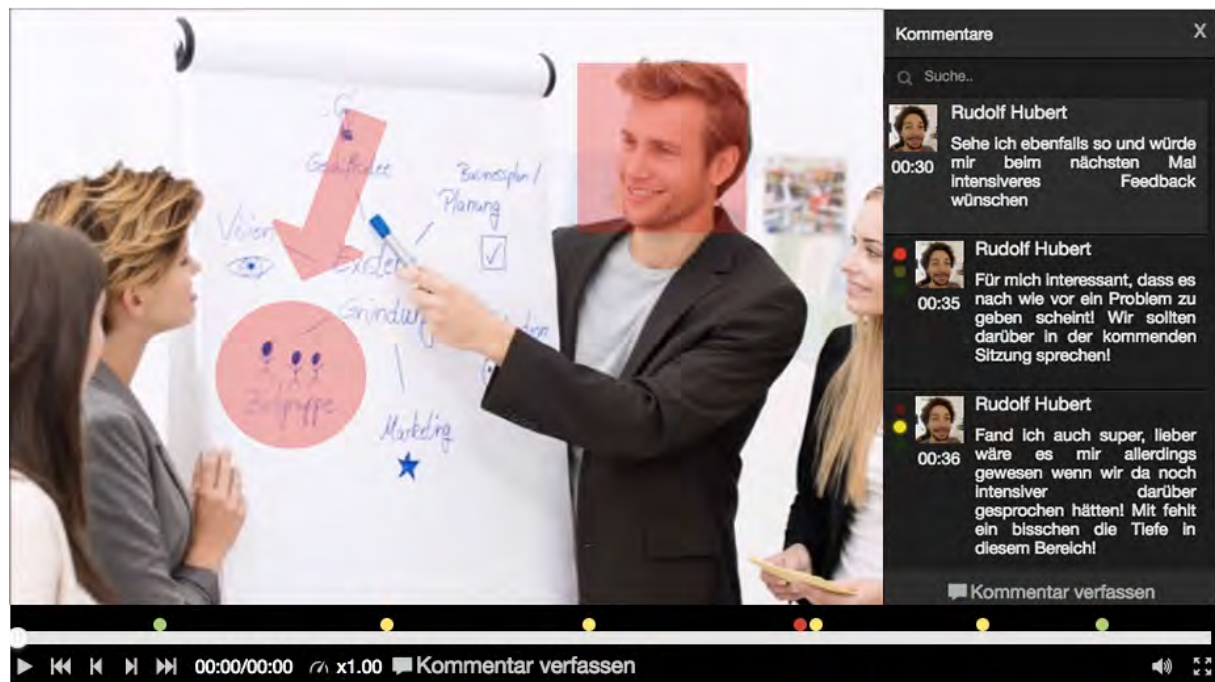


Figure 6: Example of getting feedback on a presentation and a follow-up discussion.

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