Validation of Service related Learning Outcomes with an IT based Assessment and Evidencing System

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La VITA è bella! – European Award

VITA intends to provide a system to validate personal and social competences that are mostly neglected by formal validation systems. VITA makes use of the LEVEL5 system which is specifically designed to assess and visualise personal, social and organisational competence developments in rather non- and informal learning settings.

In May 2013, the VITA consortium launched the European Award "La VITA è bella" – an award for innovative practice and initiatives on validating competences in informal and non-formal learning in Europe. The consortium wanted to find out in how far innovative learning projects already tackle the topic of validation of social, personal and organisational competences. Award participants were asked to present projects or initiatives that promote the development of these competences in an innovative way and include practical cases or at least ideas on how learning outcomes and competence developments within this specific competence area can be assessed and evidenced also beyond the walls of formal education.

An independent jury had the difficult task of choosing the most creative projects from among the numerous entries. The contributions were evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Innovation: Original solutions to non-formal and informal learning problems and needs
- Validation: The way learning outcomes are assessed and evidenced
- Impact: Potential and actual effect on participants, learning context and the society in general
- Sustainability: Continuation of this innovation
- Transferability: Potential use of the innovation in other contexts

VITA trophies' production

And the award goes to…

Eleven projects were chosen and their representatives were invited to present their project at the VITA-conference which was held on October 9th, 2013 in Dublin with an international audience. Nine out of the eleven winners were available and followed our invitation to Dublin. Please read more about all winning projects hereafter.

Integrating Together (Samen Inburgeren), Belgium

College University Gent, Mix!t (Forum for Study, Documentation and Research on Societal Diversity), represented in the conference by Charlotte De Kock
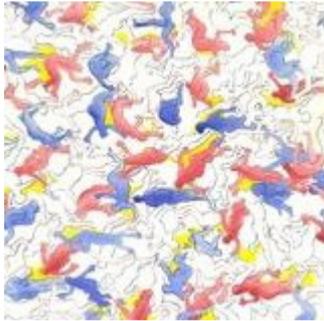
Mix!t is a forum for education, documentation and research on societal diversity. It is integrated in the Faculty of Social Work, Health and Education of the University College of Ghent. The main goal is to create acknowledgement of societal diversity and consequently a more tolerant society.

Mix!t coordinated the project "Integrating Together". This project links the needs of first year bachelor students in social work to the needs of young migrants living in the city of Ghent. The students feel the need to manifest their primary engagement in practise during their first year, while they do not yet possess the skills to act in the actual social work field. Also, they rarely know about the lived world of young migrants and often do not yet possess the sensitivity of going around with trauma in youngsters. Young migrants on the other hand often do not possess the proper social network to train their language skills in informal ways and are hereby less informed on the abilities to engage in leisure activities in which their peers born in Belgium take part.

Within the scope of Mix!t, taking into account the needs of young migrants as well as of the students and the competences they need to professionally perform social work, the forum brings together these youngsters to learn from each other. After forming a tandem, student and young migrant meet at least twice a month in an informal setting. The main goal is for the student to gain intercultural competences and for the migrant to learn Dutch and have fun! This is a new way of enhancing the integration process of young migrants.

Both members of the tandems are contacted at least once a month to find out how they feel about the project, if there are any problems, how they go around with them and so on. Right now HIVA (University of Leuven) is working on an online tool to evaluate the long term impact on society and personal lives of the participants.

For further information: www.mixithogent.com

Distance Learning Co-ordinator, Ireland

National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA), represented in the conference by Tom O' Mara

The National Adult Literacy Agency has been running a Distance Learning Service since 2000. This service provides referral and learning options over the telephone and online to adults. Adults are prompted to call NALA's Freephone number by watching prime time TV series on the theme of literacy. To date, NALA has produced 13 TV
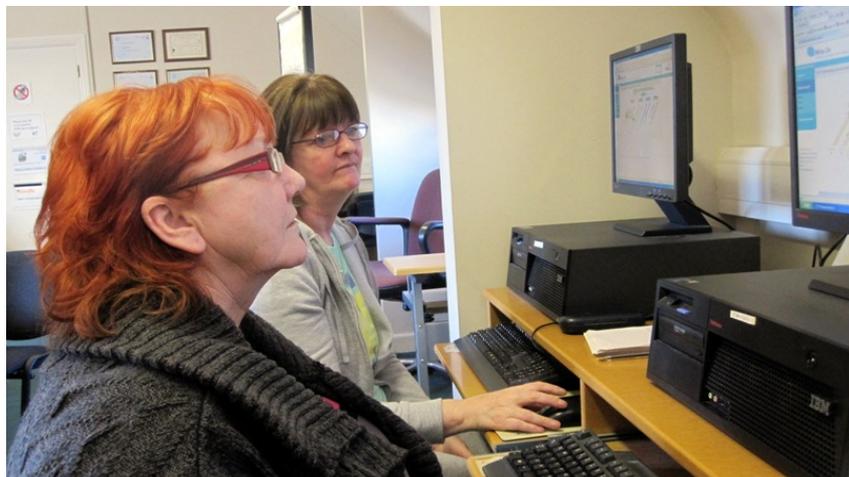
series, broadcast on RTÉ and engages with up to 5,000 adult callers every year, 600 of whom opt for distance learning with NALA.

NALA's approach to raising awareness and engaging with learners was recognised by the European Commission in 2012 when it was selected as one of 16 examples of best practice in their publication Study on strategies for improving participation in and awareness of adult learning: European Guide.

In September 2008, NALA's Distance Learning Service launched the website www.writeon.ie, targeted at adult learners working at Level 2 on the National Framework of Qualifications for Ireland. In October 2010, Level 3 awards were added.

Users of the site have their skills assessed and are then recommended an individual learning plan to improve these areas. At the end of the learning phase, users are presented with an opportunity to have their skills assessed and request a national qualification.

To date, over 1,300 adults learners have received over 12,500 minor awards at Levels 2 and 3 through www.writeon.ie. The site has also been used in over 180 different learning centres in blended learning contexts as well (incl. disability organisations, community education settings, probation services, special schools and school completion projects).

For further information: www.writeon.ie

The Human Library – Where the books are people, Czech Republic
Nachod Public Library, represented in the conference by Barbara Eisele

The Human library is just like a real library, you can come for free as a reader and select a book that interests you, read it and then maybe choose another one. Only here the books are people representing stereotypes.

The Human Library is an innovative method designed to promote dialogue, reduce prejudices and encourage understanding. Instead of a round-table event or a seminar on the importance of unity in diversity, it brings people together in a café to challenge their prejudices over coffee.

Volunteers are recruited to represent a particular stereotype and make themselves available as human books. Readers, or visitors of the human library rent any book for half an hour over a Fairtrade coffee/ tea provided by the Human Library Team. The goal is that 'readers' do away with their stereotypes by having a one-to-one conversation with the human book. The ultimate goal is that the human story prevails over the stereotype.

In order to evaluate and provide evidence of the learning outcomes all 'readers' are asked to complete a survey in which they evidence the competences they acquired: higher degree of cultural awareness, greater ease of communication with different areas of society, a sense of initiative in that numerous students stated they would repeat the format with other groups and adapt it, a much higher level of social and civic competences in terms of empathising with and valuing all aspects of society.

For further information: https://m.facebook.com/events/538921242844920?_ft_

Competencies for Labour Market, Czech Republic
RPIC-ViP s.r.o., represented in the conference by Zdeněk Karásek

The development of key competencies (soft skills) demanded by employers can increase opportunities of the first-job seekers, the unemployed and employees to succeed on the labour market. Key competencies, however, do not play an important role in the school curricula and in the training programmes for adults. The traditional education system is focused mainly on the development of general and profession related knowledge and, sometimes, of professional skills.

In 2003 to 2004 the experts of RPIC-ViP, an HR consulting firm located in Ostrava, implemented a research based on the analysis of more than 800 interviews with employers – small, medium and large-sized companies. As a result the Competence Model for Labour Market was prepared which identified the 14 most demanded soft competencies and presented a methodology for their description and development. Since 2005 the 2nd round of EQUAL initiative had enabled to develop and test the innovative programmes for the soft competencies trainings of adults. These programmes were successfully tested with 420 adults from relevant target groups. In 2006, the "Competencies for Labour Market" Project, led by RPIC-ViP and its 22 partners, was confirmed as a good practice EU model in LED: Local Employment Development.

The unique modular set of training toolkits for 14 competencies is currently available in Czech and English and other language adaptations of selected competencies are being done into Dutch, Spanish, Polish and Turkish.

For further information: www.keycompetencies.eu

Living Literacy Trail, Ireland
Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board, represented in the conference by Margaret Howard

The Waterford Living Literacy Trail was developed for adult literacy students, further to research promoting engagement in genuine literacy events as an effective form of learning. The purpose of the trail was to invite learners to practice their literacy skills in real life situations, with the support of tutors / fellow students. The trail involved students walking to six locations and answering a series of literacy based questions at these locations. Inclusive practice and flexible participation were key considerations in this project.

Why is it innovative?

1. Learners practice authentic literacy tasks outside the classroom.
2. Supported strategies for exploring literacy events.
3. Learning by doing – kinaesthetic learning opportunity.
4. Links to FETAC certification.
5. Replicable and transferable.
6. Offers opportunities for integrating literacy.
7. Offers opportunities for critical engagement

extracted from the presentation in the award ceremony

The trail was based on FETAC guidelines for certification, which meant that trails could be included as part of FETAC learner assessment to fulfil a variety of learning objectives. Student, centre and organisational reactions to the trail were very positive. Recommendations for replicating the literacy trail are outlined. Future development of the literacy trail concept

includes expansion of the trail to alternate locations and the design of a permanent literacy trail.

For further information: www.waterfordvec.ie

The film: 'Hard to become who you are', The Netherlands
To-gather, represented in the conference by Wim Kratsborn

The project's learning arrangement consists of a film about, for and with young people. The aim of the project is to create a multiple-choice identity in a creative and active way. It gives young people the skills they need to organise information, and to know what is going on. They develop their own life-style by making use of their communication skills and creativity and by cooperating in groups and with young people from other cultures. It is about the self and the other.

The film is about nine young people, travelling by train through Europe and the Arab world. Each person has an own character/identity and is confronted with dilemmas, such as a violent conflict, the meeting of the other, being unemployed in the economic crisis and taking responsibility for the future.

The film is situated in the present, but sometimes there are flashbacks to the past in a virtual way.

The stations are:
1. Passchendale, where they are part of the battle of Passchendale in 1917
2. Riga, where they travel by train through the Cold War in 1956, 1968, 1979, 1989 and 1991
3. Amsterdam, where they try to find an own solution for the Crisis and take part in the Global Tweet Revolution
4. Caïro, where they are confronted with the future turning points and try to find learning points as the youth of Europe and the Arab world.
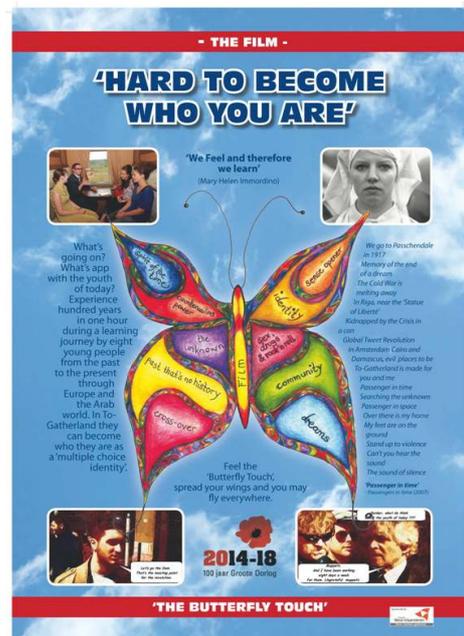
The whole learning arrangement consists of the film (five scenes, duration 60 minutes) five didactical booklets per scene and as background information the book 'Hard to become who you are' (2014).

The learning outcomes are evaluated and evidenced related to the book, the booklets and the work in practice. After the workshops and the showing of the film the effects are evaluated related to knowledge, skills and attitudes. In 2013, 2000 young people saw the film.

Do you want a presentation, a lecture, a performance and/or a workshop with the film?
Please contact Wim Kratsborn: w.kratsborn@planet.nl

YOUTH4SOCIETY, Belgium
Time4Society, represented by Nathalie Bekx

Time4Society is a Belgian non-profit organisation that matches time-givers with those that need time in society. Time4Society is the No.1 organisation in Belgium in its field, specialising in corporate social responsibility initiatives in which businesses invest time in social, ecological and cultural causes by undertaking tangible, worthy and practical projects.

´Youth4Society´ is an ongoing project delivered by Time4Society that began in 2010 in which social, ecological and cultural projects with a range of community organisations are facilitated as a learning activity for young people from the ages of 11 to 18 years in 30 secondary schools across Belgium free of charge. The projects deliver proven results in making a real difference not only to the environment and to the lives of people from disadvantaged backgrounds/with disability but also to the attitudes and competencies of the young people taking part.

The tools and resources involve placing young people in supervised scenarios for either a full day or a half day in which they are forced to consider their current attitudes to working in social environments and in which they are required to complete tasks which produce tangible results.

The project effectively equips young people with a series of competencies which prepare them better to make positive contributions to the world of business, to their local communities and to society as a whole. These include:

- a change in attitude of young people to working in the social sector;
- an improvement in the employability prospects of young people;
- the development of the leadership skills of young people;
- the development of team working, communication and interpersonal skills of young people; and
- the promotion of further involvement in the social sector after completion of the project.

Learning outcomes were evaluated both informally through discussion, reflection and feedback and also formally through a set of questionnaires completed by both the young people on what they had learnt and by the organisations on the contribution of the young people to their projects. Learning outcomes were evidenced through reports compiled on the basis of these evaluations.

For further information: www.time4society.com

Move your minds...minds on the move (CamminaMenti), Italy
Municipality of Udine, submitted by: Stefania Pascut

CamminaMenti is a project designed exclusively for community members aged over 65 with the goal to improve their cognitive skills by offering group meetings dedicated to subjects of interest. The meetings are held in public meeting halls which are readily accessible and free to participants. The purpose of the meetings is to boost cognitive brain functions and accelerate mind and motor skills through memory games, mathematics, English words in common use, social card games, calligraphy, music and information on how to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle while ageing.

The project is financed by the Udine Municipality city taxes and is carried out in collaboration with many local stakeholders dealing with education and learning, such as the Local Health Agency, the University, the municipal libraries, the game library, and several associations from the third sector.

The project is at an experimental phase now and in 2014 the project will spread to other areas of the city and will be available as a constant offer in order to inspire the community to enhance memory and recall ability while engaged in a more active and healthy lifestyle.

This project is closely linked to the WHO Healthy Cities Programme which promotes awareness of a healthy lifestyle at all ages and healthy and active ageing according to the slogan 'adding life to years not only years to life'.

An assessment of the participants' perception regarding their mental abilities and their satisfaction with the training program has been carried out according to scientific literature in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the project.

For further information: www.comune.udine.it

My Block Gallery, France
submitted by: Anna Lynn Rodriguez,

In Marseilles, a third of the population lives in disadvantaged areas. If these are known nowadays as urban ghettos and are famous for their incivilities and their widespread deterioration, they once were sources of inspiration for famous painters such as Cezanne, Picasso, and Van Gogh. Targeting young adults who've never felt proud of their living place, this project uses the work of famous painters as a tool to explore today's reality and valorise it, in order to develop skills required in the area of tourism employment. The idea is to create a change for a public often in lack of hope and perspectives. The history of a painting and of its painter is a starting point.
The young people search for famous paintings produced in and around their living area, choose the paintings they want to "explore", and locates these in today's scenery (Google Earth). Once the paintings have been allocated to the different members, each group member physically goes to the spot where his/her work of art was painted and takes pictures of the original spot as it is nowadays. The group presents their work in a professional format

using a graphic editing programme. The original painting and the newly taken picture are juxtaposed and can be part of different exhibitions. The fact that the final product will or not, be part of exhibitions in various places will be used to measure the technical skills' acquisition (ICT, picture taking and editing, social networking) as well as the development of communication skills (written, oral, negotiation skills).
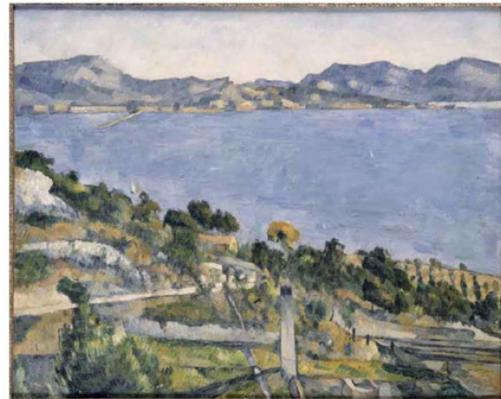
L'Estaque vu du golfe de Marseille – Paul Cézanne

The development of soft skills for each participant is measured by assessing them at the beginning and at the end of the project by means of individual interviews of the participants as well as of some of the persons they will meet all along this adventure.

Centralised training for institutions administering EU structural assistance
Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Lithuania, represented in the conference by Ada Matiukaite

Modern organisations focus on the importance of employee training and development, as it is one of the key factors that ensures the required qualification of people, helps retain the most talented employees, consistently plan their growth within the institutions, thus enabling them to achieve their goals.

Centralised Training of EU Structural Support administrating institutions employees' started in Lithuania in 2012.
Training was imposed on the 19 institutions that are involved in the EU Structural Funds management process. Each of these 19 institutions is responsible for the allocation of EU structural assistance in Lithuania for the period 2007-2013. The professional development system for public servants and employees administrating EU support was created on the basis of the description of the competencies which were formulated following the detailed analysis of the qualification enhancement framework. The competencies analysis of civil servants and employees administering EU structural assistance is reviewed and the description of qualification requirements is updated periodically.
This system is designed to ensure that employee qualifications are sufficient and relevant to the employee to allow them performing their assigned functions. Moreover, the accumulated knowledge and experience

are shared among the largest possible number of employees with the intention to encourage potential candidates to seek employment and remain employed within the EU structural support administration institutions.

As a result of this project, during the training, public servants have an opportunity not only to develop professionally, but also to share their experience with the representatives of other institutions, thus improving cooperation among the institutions that administrate EU structural support. As the number of qualified public servants grows, the quality of services provided to the residents and project operators can only improve. The existing and newly acquired knowledge is applied more efficiently in the ever changing work environment in civil service.

After each training session, a survey for a target group of attendees is organised seeking to establish the quality of training and provide an evaluation of the practical benefits. A survey asks participants to evaluate their knowledge before and after the seminar.

For further information: www.finmin.lt

Tutorship and Capitalization of Competences, France
INSUP, represented in the conference by: Alexandra Sanchis

TCC (Tutorship and Capitalization of Competences) was born from a European project co-financed by the ESF (European Social Fund). This innovative project was carried out in 2011 by INSUP formation in partnership with the ARML (Association of Regional and Local Missions) and DIRECCTE Aquitaine (The Project Regional Office), to support the 23 Local Missions (social associations for 16-25 years old in Aquitaine) to identify and capitalise young people competences. This tool is in use in the professional practices today.
The TCC's main support mission is to help for a better vocational guidance as well as a better positioning on the job-market.
TCC promotes the development of transverse competences, in other words social personal organisational competences, during a job experience. TCC uses the approach TORAM (Implementation, Organisation, Relations, Adaptation, and Management) developed by INSUP and EPSECO in 2008 (EQUAL CAPPRO European project). Every field describes several abilities. TCC includes an assessment grid of these abilities at five levels.

As secure extranet (tcc-aquitaine.fr), TCC is a pedagogical tool shared by the Local Mission counsellor, the company tutor and the beneficiary. With his/her counsellor's help, the young candidate can carry out a self-assessment during an internship or a job experience. In the same time, the company tutor can evaluate the same skills. TCC allows comparing the evaluations, and measuring the gaps between the youth's and the tutor's assessment.

Workshop with Local Mission in Aquitaine

On TCC, several evaluations are possible during the same period of time (e.g. at the beginning and at the end). TCC also allows generating graphs displaying skills evolutions. The young people make theirs these skills and

learn how to value them in a job search. To date, 500 young people have benefited from this tool. TCC generates a bank of skills, a CV and a certificate of job experience.

For further information: www.tcc-info.insup.org

VITA award winners and VITA partners

The VITA team wants to thank all participants in the award for their interesting contributions and highly innovative projects and initiatives. Special thanks go to the award winners who honoured us by attending the conference to present their projects.

The VITA-Consortium

- BUPNET GmbH, Bildung und Projekt Netzwerk, Göttingen, Germany
- Die Berater ® Unternehmensberatungsgesellschaft mbH, Vienna, Austria
- INSUP Formation, Bordeaux, France
- Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania
- SVEB, Zürich, Switzerland VIA University College
- Aontas, National Adult Learning Organisation, Dublin, Ireland
- METU, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey
- VIA University College, Aarhus, Denmark
- Aristotle University, Thessaloniki, Greece
- blinc eG, Göttingen, Germany

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