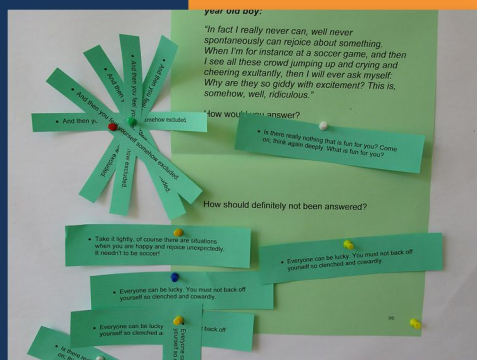


Teacher Training Concept

The Frame for the Teacher Training Program in PROVED



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The Teacher Training Concept

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The teacher training concept in PROVED

The teacher training concept in PROVED was developed and provided within the framework of the project PROVED. It should be a basis for the multiplier institutions involved in PROVED to advance further training activities in their countries, either in formal (schools) or informal education (youth centres, drug prevention centres) and it should help other interested people to introduce *Productive Learning* in their countries.

The teacher training concept gives an overview of its aims, principles, constituent parts and organization and ends with conclusions and recommendations regarding the teacher training. The concept was developed with drawing on the experience gained by every institution involved in the project.

1 The aims of the teacher training concept

Productive Learning is learning on the basis of personal interests and of experiences gained in practice placements, chosen by young people themselves. The students use skills and knowledge acquired through education to determine and to understand their activities in real-life social situations. The educational process is structured by an individual curriculum. *Productive Learning* combines consequently theory and practice in vocational orientation and education.

The (vocational and special needs) teachers in *Productive Learning* work as counsellors supporting students by forming an autonomous and independent educational process, supporting them in their transition to the world of work.

This individualized and practice related pedagogical approach requires new methods of teaching. Therefore the further training activities in the frame of PROVED were aimed at developing the following competencies in particular:

- Subject competence (for example, to optimise processes and procedures, monitoring work results, the ability to acquire and to reflect on theories that are subject-specific and relevant);
- Personal competence (for example recognising and articulating personal strengths and weaknesses, the ability to adapt to new situations and to be flexible, to be able to recognise and to implement different options for actions);
- Social competence (for example ‘appreciative’ and effective communication, offering suitable feedback, the ability to co-operate at work);

- Method competency (in particular methods in *Productive Learning*, but also developing strategies that offer solutions to problems, by developing management skills of the students, to be able to support the learning process of participating students by employing target-oriented methods).

During the project PROVED the concept development and the implementation process were connected with the qualification of the teaching staff of the participating vocational education institutions. The teacher training program ran alongside the project. In the future, when more schools and teachers in the four participating countries decide to work with the new *Productive Learning-VET*-conception it's foreseen that teachers who want to implement *Productive Learning-VET*-conception in their school will qualify themselves while practicing the new pedagogical approach.

2 The principles of the teacher training

Learning is a life-long process and, in this context, we regard further and continued education as a central precondition for personal and professional development. Our objective of further training is to offer support to participants whilst developing their own professional competencies.

*Time does not transform us
time unfolds us
(Max Frisch)*

With regard to professional development - the personal aspect, the practice aspect as well as the subject and the cultural aspect were important principles for the teacher training concept in PROVED. In relation to teaching and learning this translates into the following aspects:

Designing learning processes on the basis of the learning person by:

- clarifying learners' expectations in view of learning processes and results,
- considering personal learning interests and objectives,
- identifying individual preconditions for learning,
- aligning personal interests for learning, objectives and pre-requisites with concrete learning demands and role expectations,
- measuring the means and frames that are provided for the individual learner.

Designing learning processes on the basis of demands posed by the concrete professional day-to-day practice by:

- dealing with the demands and expectations of day-to-day professional practice,
- raising awareness of professional experiences and competencies,
- reflecting on challenges from one's personal professional practice,
- translating learning outcomes into professional day-to-day practice,
- connecting and stabilising the learning experience and putting it into real life conditions.

Designing learning processes on the basis of subject knowledge and theories by:

- reflecting on subject-specific and relevant theories and models,
- application of theories and models to professional practice and to personal actions.

Designing learning processes considering demands and needs of the national educational system and of the local community by:

- involving and preparing enterprises and mentors for a cooperation,
- involving the school authority in the concept development,
- involving national experts from different levels for creation and development of the teacher training concept.

The further training activities were based on ...

- the principles of *Productive Learning*: personal aspect, practice aspect, subject and cultural aspect,
- a solution-oriented approach: problems present opportunities for development, every person has the resources and the abilities to deal with problems independently, dealing with problems successfully in the present points towards future solutions,
- a systematic observation, for example, respect for system's own dynamics, working with proposals which view reality in a different or in a novel way whilst considering different expectations, hopes and desires,
- an openness to new experience and education innovations, sharing the best practice, dialogue-based and peer learning, and digital learning.

3 Constituent parts and organisation of the teacher training

The teacher training program, as an important feature of school development, was addressed to the teachers involved in the project (vocational and special needs teachers). Each participating school (vocational school, training centre, adult school) decided about two to four people of the staff who work on the implementation of *Productive Learning-in-VET* and

in parallel take part in the training program. At the same time they were actively involved in the (further) development of the training activities. The concept development, the core of the project, was embedded in all project activities and was a very important project activity to qualify the teachers involved. The following project activities were embedded in the teacher training:

1. International seminars
2. School based trainings
3. Study letter
4. Pedagogical manual

3.1 International seminars

Two international seminars were planned in the frame of the project. The main aim of the international seminars was to support the teachers involved in the project to develop an adapted *Productive Learning* concept for their vocational school.

To realize this aim there were other important aims:

- to get acquainted with the “philosophy” of *Productive Learning*,
- to get practical “tools” for working with students,
- to get support by developing strategies for implementing *Productive Learning* in the participating schools.

Because of the cancellation of the travel costs for the international seminars by the National Agency (with reference to the daily work situation of the teachers involved, the seminars were organised as three days seminars instead of five days seminars), the consortium had to change the teacher training concept.

The consortium agreed about the high importance of the introductory seminar in Berlin where *Productive Learning* is already implemented in 21 secondary schools. Therefore the 1st seminar took place as planned in the preparation phase focusing on the methodology of *Productive Learning*, the new role, on new tasks and its consequences for the development of the adapted *Productive Learning* concepts. It was combined with training activities in practice. The main topics of the 1st international seminar were: 1) target groups of *Productive Learning* in VET, 2) teachers role, 3) orientation period, 4) learning in practice, 5) school visit / visit of practice places in Berlin with *Productive Learning*-students, 6) educational counselling / “non-directive counselling” (Carl Rogers), 7) learning in groups / communication groups (Ruth Cohn), 8) assessment of achievement / evaluation of the educational process.

The 2nd seminar was replaced by other teacher training activities with reference to the following aspects:

- The concepts, developed during the preparation phase, were very different. Because of different needs of the participating schools in different countries the multiplier institutions decided during an extra meeting to offer **specific local seminars for the country groups**.
- The topic “mobile/digital learning in *Productive Learning*” (good practice at OMNIA/Finish partner) was of high interest for all partners. Therefore the consortium decided about a teacher training module introducing this topic. This module included an inquiry (What are the needs of the partners at PROVED regarding the question “How to introduce digital/mobile learning into *Productive Learning*?”), **introductory training sessions** after the partner meeting, one to two **self-study days** and a **webinar** referring to the results of the inquiry.

3.2 School based trainings

School based trainings supported the process of the development of the specific *Productive Learning* concept, the testing and implementation process in each participating vocational school / training center: difficulties in the process were discussed and strategies were developed, the whole staff was informed and involved. A collaborative training (one expert from the multiplier institution in the country + one expert from IPLE) ensured that different perspectives and competences were included in the training. There were two school based trainings per vocational education institution involved, one in the preparation phase and one in the implementation phase.

In addition to the school based trainings **local seminars** pursued the aim to build cooperation between the vocational education institutions and the enterprises in the region. They were important to integrate the perspective of the world of work to the curriculum development and to develop strategies and skills in accompanying the young people in their learning process. They were designed as collaborative trainings: expert from the multiplier institution in the country + expert from IPLE. These local seminars were open for participants of other vocational schools and vocational training centers in the region.

3.3 Study letter

In the frame of PROVED a study letter was developed which introduces the topic “Vocational Orientation through *Productive Learning* and *Productive Learning* in Vocational Training”. The study letter was designed for the self-study of the participants of the teacher training

and for mentors. In future the study letter should support teachers who are motivated to implement *Productive Learning* in their (VET) school.

The main aims for the development of the study letter were:

- to give information for teachers about *Productive Learning (PL)* in VET,
- to show examples of organization of *PL* in VET,
- to give examples of concrete activities in *PL* (experiences in PROVED),
- to make the teachers reflect their pedagogical work in *PL* in VET (questions).

The first part of this Study Letter deals with the process of vocational orientation for young people – a process which is immanent in *Productive Learning* – and will present various perspectives or insights into this area. The second part presents options for the transfer of experiences from *Productive Learning* in general education to the area of vocational training and qualification. Ideas on how *Productive Learning* can be anchored in vocational orientation are meant to provide impulses for current approaches for further developments in this area. A big challenge was to develop *one* common study letter for different countries regarding all different systems and needs.

3.4 Pedagogical manual

If young people should learn in practice, there are different steps in the learning process which have to be accompanied with different methods and material, e.g. recognizing and developing personal interests, skills, strengths, needs, aims, matching these personal characteristics and demands with conditions and possibilities in practice, linking practice and theory etc.

In this connection it was important to develop methods and materials which help the teachers to support the students in their individual and work based learning process. The manual, including introductions into important aspects of *Productive Learning*, methods, instruments and work sheets, was developed with regard to the adapted *Productive Learning* concepts, the target groups and the cultural characteristics. All partner institutions were involved in the process.

In addition to the training activities described, IPLE developed material for the partners (questionnaires, guidelines, framework conception), which supported the process of concept development. The partner meetings also helped to reflect upon the concept development; they were also important to reflect upon the teacher training concept and its activities and to decide together about changes.

4 Conclusions and recommendations

Productive Learning in VET may be considered as an original pedagogical system that is distinguished for its education concept and the system of methods applied. This leads to pre-conditions for emerging of a new teaching training concept, which must be flexible, targeted at development of required competences, it must combine theoretical and practical aspects, and be in line with the concept of school development.

School development and teacher training

School development and teacher training are closely interconnected. “To learn differently” also means “to teach differently”. Changes are based on experiences – within practice and with such practice, and also through a joint day-to-day routine with students. Even though the role of the teacher changes through experiences, additional support and assistance must be provided through the input of others to generalize a systematic reflection.

Three main requirements had to be fulfilled at the same time in PROVED: the active involvement in the development of the teacher training concept, the participation in the teacher training activities and the implementation and testing of a new pedagogical concept in practice. These were high demands and big challenges for the teachers involved. At the same time it was good and necessary that everyone was involved. Therefore in future a concentration on less activities and/or another chronology (“one by one”) could help to avoid feelings of overextension.

Competence based training

When pupils are meant to learn to be more in control of their own educational process, to develop their own interests in education and activity, to explore their chosen field of practical activity with curiosity, and to connect it to the learning that is taking place at vocational school – then this surely must translate into new and challenging tasks for their teachers, and this also arises new questions for the teachers, for example:

How can I support a student during the process of exploring his or her practical place of learning? How can I support students to learn *independently*? How could I help students to connect practical experience and theory systematically? What common general topics derive from individual experiences? etc.

These questions underline that it is not enough to acquire a different or more comprehensive repertoire of methods. Working in *Productive Learning* means also to question one’s own personal attitudes, one’s self-image as a (vocational or special needs) teacher, and one’s role expectations.

Work based teacher training

The daily routine or experience of teachers is an important “subject” in the frame of teacher training activities. PROVED has shown that problems and challenges are a good starting point for learning processes. This connection between “theory and practice” motivates teachers to improve their own acting and supports the sustainability of learning results.

In accordance with *Productive Learning*'s own principals and methodical and content-based objectives this programme of further study is project- and process-based and thus related to the practice itself.

At the same time teachers need to “feel safe” if they start a change process. Even if they agree with the principle described they focus in the beginning on getting as much basic knowledge as possible. This correlates with answers like “more seminars about *Productive Learning*”, “earlier” (inquiry after the 1st project year).

Flexibility of teacher training concepts

It is important to clarify the aims, principles and parts of the teacher training in the beginning of a project. At the same time the diversity in international projects (different cultural and political backgrounds, different education and school systems) requires flexibility in the process, the willingness and the possibility to adopt the concept to the demands and needs which arise or change in the process.

Combination of different training formats

Different training formats guaranteed that the process referred to the different needs:

- individual needs (study letter, individual study lessons),
- needs of the institution (school based trainings and local seminars),
- needs of a cooperation in an international consortium and the aims of a project (international seminar, webinar, partner meeting).

They promote personal reflections on the one hand and an exchange among the participants on the other hand.

It is recommended to follow this teacher training concept, however, every party that implements *Productive Learning* in VET has to develop the national teacher training concept of its own. In the process of development of such a concept, one should draw not only on this recent concept but also on the already existing concept of *Productive Learning* teacher training in regular schools.

The following conclusive recommendations are presented to different target groups.

1. Recommendation to educators involved to *Productive Learning* in VET or starting to adopt the *Productive Learning* model in future.
→ Teachers are recommended to cooperate and get involved in networking with teachers, who are working in similar (self-) educational conditions.

2. Recommendation to institutions having an intention to introduce *Productive Learning* in VET or to continue the *Productive Learning* in VET.
→ It is recommended to integrate teacher training for *Productive Learning* teachers into the common teacher training system of school and involve all school community members.

3. Recommendation to institutions where teachers are educated and their professional skills improved.
→ It is recommended to update the existing teacher qualification programmes in response to the concept of *Productive Learning* in VET and specific needs of teachers. It would be appropriate to coordinate the teacher training concept with the training programme of teachers, who work with the regular school *Productive Learning* model.

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