

BP-News!

May 2015

The project is funded by
Erasmus+
2014-1-NL01-KA202-001229



Project consortium:



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What does Blended Programme stand for?

VET education is offering many opportunities for students to go abroad and do their workplacement in a foreign country.

Yet it is not possible for VETstudents to follow classes at a VETinstitution in a hostcountry, to experience an international traineeship and to tick off certain parts of their examination during this period of internship. Additionally students will learn about the customs of the hostcountry and share and enlighten their own with the other participants who are again from another/other foreign country/countries..

Coordinator of the Blended Programme project is Landstede (NL). The other partners are CIELS from Ireland and SATAEDU from Finland.

Summary

At the moment there is a growth of VETstudents going abroad for their internships. It is common knowledge that these international experiences help them grow in knowledge and skills of their future professions and students also grow personally. Unfortunately it is also wellknown that a rather high percentage of VETstudents have a delay in their courses after return, in their homecountries. This is because it is not possible for students to do and pass (certain parts of) exams while on internships in a foreign country. Tutors of companies in hostcountries are not accredited to grade students as recommended by examboards of the several institutions in the homecountries.

The partners of this application recognize the following problems for VETstudents when approached to go abroad for their internship:

- knowledge of the English language is not at such a level enabling students to feel comfortable and fully accepted as a colleague at their workplacement
- no guidance in course study to enable students to do (certain parts of) exams in a hostcountry
- tutors at workplacements of hostcountries are not recognized/accredited by (certain institutions of) homecountries
- impossibility to do exams abroad, in hostcountries
- demotivation among VETstudents as they foresee problems of delay in finishing their VETcourses after return.

Blended Programme includes:

- curriculumbased module to be attended
- lessons to upgrade English and English for different Specific Purposes
- awareness of EU
- international internship
- accredited tutor at workplacement
- examination at workplacement
- cultural awareness
- sustainability of Blended Programme by implementation in curricula of the participating countries

Visit us at:

<http://blendedprogramme.net/>

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1st and 2nd Partnership meeting in Carlow

The 1st and 2nd partnership meetings in Carlow have been a great success. The 1st meeting focused more on preparation for the inaugural Blended Programme Group and the 2nd took place while the 1st group was in Carlow. They were a great learning experience for all involved, both teachers and students!

Cultural Differences

As there are people from three different countries from three very different areas of Europe, cultural differences came to the fore. What was clear is that everybody had the same issues with living and working in a different country. The best approach to resolving these difficulties was to help one another and to continuously communicate thoughts and feelings. This way, cultural differences can be embraced rather than developing negatively.

Team Building

To assist students in bonding and forming good relationships with their new housemates and classmates, they were sent on a team building session with professional youth workers from Carlow Youth Services. These exercises really help to forge a strong team ethos. Leading from this, it was decided that team building and group activities such as Irish dancing will be included as official activities for future Blended Programme Groups.

Work Duties

Many participant students hoped to do more 'real' duties in their workplaces in Carlow. Due to different education systems and skills, many of the Irish work places like to develop trust before allowing some duties to be performed by participants. Once this is communicated to the students, they seem happy with this. Again, it seems that communication is the key here.

Carlow

Carlow is a great place to be an international student. At least this is what interviews with participants at the 1st and 2nd meeting have said. They find Irish people easy to talk to and while Carlow is a small town, it hosts many international students and it is easy to meet people. It is also easy to get from accommodation to anywhere in Carlow quite quickly.



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Progress of the project

On September 15, 2014 Blended Programme officially started. Soon after this date the first official students' mobility was realized: two separate groups of students departed from their home countries, Finland and The Netherlands, to Ireland.

Less than one month later their tutors, partners of BP, flew to Ireland for their second steering board meeting. This meeting was planned to enable the tutors to meet their students in order to coach them on the spot. This integration of tasks helped us to tackle some problems we would not have been aware of if we had not been on the spot. By these 'lessons learnt' we were able to further develop BP in order to stabilize its foundation for the future.

The foundation of BP concerns the outcomes which are to be in writing, the offer of training for employees of organisations which offer work placements, in order to have students assessed on-the-job. Also the practical execution of students' mobilities and the arrangement of these together with the execution of the preparation programme for the students themselves.

The preparation phase for students is one to be carried out with care in order to have students gain more confidence and making them aware what is expected of them. BP is a very demanding programme which students have to realize well before their departure. Much is expected of these students from the moment they have applied for participation. As we, as partners know the content of BP and our goals with this project, we are able to select and guide these students before, during and after their BP experience.

The BP experience is very special to students. They develop themselves socially, in language skills and cognitively. They live in another country and have to take care of themselves while sharing a home with other students, all having their own social manners. They learn more about other countries and experience these different cultures. They gain enormous knowledge in the English language, orally and in writing. They follow a module and are examined and wait anxiously for their results. Students are challenged to undertake activities themselves in order to learn more about the country they reside.

Looking back on the progress we can say that all above mentioned activities, whether in writing or practical experiences, challenge partners to write and/or rewrite tasks in order to better reach our outcomes. At the same time we are looking forward to the development of BP in the future as we are all very certain that BP will develop to be a very challenging and so grateful part of the curricula in the participating countries.



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Coming soon

Project events:

Next groups from Netherlands and Finland are going to meet each other in Carlow on 9th of September 2015. This mobility isn't a real BP-project mobility but we are collecting good BP-practises by using Erasmus+ KA1 mobilities for that.

Next place to meet each other is a EfVET-conference in Paphos, Cyprus between 21st – 24th of October 2015, where we join the round table session with other EU-projects.

Between 10th – 13th of November 2015 Blended Programme has a 3rd project meeting (PM3) and it takes place in Kokemäki, Finland. During this meeting we are going to have the mini-conference and training of colleagues of work placements as well.

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