



Validation of Informal Learning in European Projects

VIP Newsletter

December 2011

The project VIP ended on November 30th, 2011, yet we have latest news to share with you on recent as well as on future activities.

In the last project month two important events took place: The VIP-team delivered a four-day training course to train future REVEAL assessors to use LEVEL5 and carried out a one-day final conference to contribute to the current discussion on how to evidence learning outcomes in collaborative projects, partnerships and mobility actions. Both events mark an important milestone in the development of our network and the LEVEL5 approach.

Course:

Validation of Informal Learning in European Projects and Mobility Actions

The four-day course took place in Alden Biesen, Belgium from the 10th to 14th of October, 2011. Its aim was to train professionals to validate learning outcomes in the framework of international learning activities by means of the LEVEL5 approach.



The 22 course participants + VIP-Team representing different educational institutions and sectors

The LEVEL5 approach is especially suitable to assess and evidence the major learning outcomes of these transnational collaborative and mobility activities which are developments of learners' personal and social competences.

The course delivered theoretical inputs on the validation of informal and non-formal learning and practical collaborative learning units on how to validate competences in different contexts and stages on the lifelong learning pathway, acquired in collaborative and mobility learning.



Validation, accreditation, recognition...
Terminology talk show



VIP Final Conference

“You know you did well in chemistry because you got an A+. But how much you actually learnt and how you personally developed from the weekend sailing course is more difficult to assess.”

This is a quotation written by a conference participant in her personal blog and it summarises nicely the idea behind LEVEL5.

The final VIP-conference took place on October 15th, 2011 in Leuven, Belgium and gathered 70 representatives of schools, universities, adult education providers, educational authorities and National Agencies from 18 different EU-countries.

The conference topic “validation of informal learning” has become a key issue in all educational sectors of the EU in the recent years. The validation of learning outcomes in formal contexts, be it in schools, universities or formal vocational training, is a rather clear issue since subject oriented standards can be applied.



When it comes to social and personal competences there is a lack of instruments to assess, evidence and document learning outcomes and learners’ developments. However, these are exactly the competences which have become increasingly important in societies strongly based on the service economy. They are mainly acquired in informal contexts such as in ex-



tracurricular school (and HE) activities, through societal learning (active citizenship) or simply through learning by doing in the workplace.

In the Leuven conference we focused on learning in collaborative European projects and mobility actions that are certainly also non-formal or informal learning spaces and that serve to a large extent to the acquisition of personal and social competences.

An “off the shelf”-assessment of those personal and social competences against standardised systems (e.g. on the basis of EQF, ECVET and ECTS) is barely conceivable, because they are mostly not suitable to display non-cognitive learning outcomes.

During the conference participants got an insight in the VIP project activities and worked with the LEVEL5 system in a hands-on session. Although the time for workshops was limited, the conference guests could get an impression how to actually apply the LEVEL5 system for assessing and evidencing those skills and competences.




Perspectives

Since May 2011, REVEAL members have been invited ever frequently to present LEVEL5 in conferences and workshops at national and European level. LEVEL5 has created curiosity and met big interest among major stakeholders – not only in the field of Adult Education but increasingly also in Vocational Training and in Higher Education.

In March 2012 we will have the opportunity to present LEVEL5 in the conference: “To implement a high quality validation process – a challenge!”, which is organised by the Nordic Network for Adult Learning (NVL), the Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning (Vox), the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training and the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) of the European Commission. The event will take place in Oslo on March 5-7, 2012. Key organisations and decision makers dealing with validation and accreditation issues from all over Europe as well as Nordic and European cooperation projects are invited.

The REVEAL group is planning the next conference in summer 2012 and we are very much looking forward to welcoming you on this occasion. We will keep you posted.

The VIP-Partnership

-  University of Kassel, Kassel, Germany
-  BUPNET GmbH, Bildung und Projekt Netzwerk, Göttingen, Germany
-  “die Berater” Unternehmensberatungsgesellschaft mbH, Vienna, Austria
-  Landcommanderij Alden Biesen, Belgium
-  Belies Consulting S.L., Barcelona, Spain
-  Romanian Institute for Adult Education IREA, Timisoara, Romania
-  CVNO, Education Center for Non-profit Organisations, Banská Bystrica Slovakia

VIP is a project that works in the framework of the REVEAL, the Research and Evaluation group for Validating, Evidencing and Assessing informal and non-formal Learning.



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