

Yhteenveto loppuraportin sisältöarvioinnista

Arvioija 1

1. ACTIVITIES

The project was confronted with fundamental changes in partnership. Two of German partners were replaced (Symmedia Akademia ja Creos Lernideen und Beratung) by one Swedish partner (MKFC Stockholms Folkhögskola) because of lack of confidence. These changes caused extra work to project and some delays in the timetable. Also one part ('Competence') planned for the final main product is not completed. The changes in partnership influenced also to dissemination activities and language versions, because some of work packages that the German partners were responsible for, has had to be reallocated to Swedish partner. But, the project did not change its original aims or objectives although the new partner from Sweden could not completely replace the original two partners expected expertise.

All the work packages were mainly undertaken as foreseen. But, the changes in the partnership caused that the distribution of workloads changed quite fundamental. Some of tasks were to be restricted, and some of tasks should allocate to Finnish partners, because the project recruited only one partner in replacing two of earlier partners.

Anyhow, the project trajectory with all its difficulties is described in very open and understandable way. The travel budget was exceeded because of 7 extra meetings. But, all those meetings were necessary for the project final success. All in all, the difficulties caused by the changes in partnership were managed very well in the project.

As strengths can be seen, especially, the testing methods and test results presented in video clip and printed material. The video clip presents the comment session where the international students participating to real trade fair in Germany (Medica 2005) in order to test the WFS concept, give real feedback about their experiences and expectations. I will take it for granted, that such an open test method may produce a great contribution also to project tasks responsible for disseminating and marketing the final project results.

As a weakness I will mention the problem in project management. Because of the very tight time schedule in the project the emerged disagreements on theoretical and practical issues and approaches between partners should have been completely discussed and quickly solved in the very beginning of the project or before the project started. The main project result, the WFS manual (the Tool) has sustained damage as delayed and unfinished results.

The extra work caused by the changes in partnership took too much energy from the core work. So, it is also difficult to measure or indicate what the project achievements could have been without troubles in partnership.

2. PRODUCTS

The WFS products and results are well applicable to different vocational institutes and adult education organisations when they will develop their learning methods and curricula emphasising the interaction between theory and practice. The final products will support the collaborative and individual learning processes where the business sector is also one participator.

The Case "Fair campaign" has shown to be an innovative choice when developing complex web-based and problem-oriented learning manuals (MENTAL TOOLS and SOFTWARE) for very different kind of business students and SME personnel. The previously known commercial products have not utilised, in general, any practical action cases or stories in order to make the complex learning issues, methods and tools easy understandable for young business students in vocational schools and SME's of very different backgrounds. The main advantage concern the modern approaches to marketing, including integrated marketing strategy and customer relationship management (CRM). The WFS emphasises the learning

approaches that focus on collaborative knowledge creation and common and individual knowledge management.

The WEB FAIR-a software for WFS makes possible to create individual and organisational learning and project portfolios that are customised by requirements of the main product. WEB FAIR seems to be realised as planned. In the software solution the pedagogical and technological approaches are supporting very well to each other from theoretical and practical points of view, especially in the area, how to create new knowledge in collaboration, use it and evaluate it.

The lay out and the structure are supporting quite well the logic how to plan and implement national and international fair and other market event campaigns. The software is useful for project managers, in general.

All in all, the WEB FAIR in terms of software supports very well the logic and objectives required by the end-users and systems development users in order to support the trade fair manual into full utilisation. The Vocabulary, the content of the manual, seems to be carefully created in terms of theoretical and practical purposes. It helps the students in vocational schools and the workers in SME's understand the complex issues what are the fairs and how the fairs shall to be planned, implemented and evaluated. Also it helps to increase understanding how to learn continuously when working with complex issues like marketing strategies, implementations and learning.

Case study seems to be very useful and practical approach when describing the innovation process and the learning process development as embedded trajectories. So, the Process Guide supports to increase understanding and maybe also the motivation when the students from vocational, practice-oriented schools and the company workers are in common research and learning projects in terms of the Case that requires strategic thinking and practical implementation abilities.

The tests made by the real business students and participants on fairs as the main target groups show, that the trade fair manual is able to increase the motivation to learn complex issues in schools and in practice. It can also deepen the understanding and awareness of theoretical and practical questions and thinking in what is the fair campaign and how to design, manage, evaluate and create new knowledge in considering and implementing the national and international marketing and events campaigns.

Especially, the WFS is useful and practical tool for SME's, because they have in many cases quite diversified backgrounds in levels of their expertise on strategy-led management skills and on formal education. All in all, the WFS is an open source internet-based product that create possibilities to use it easy by the outlined target groups. All the partners are planning to develop the product further and create new products on basis of current achievements.

As weakness I will mention that the WEB FAIR TOOL as trade fair manual has remained unfinished in terms of the very important tool. The incomplete part of the product concern the issues on 'Competence'. But, the partners have made an agreement how they should and could develop this part further in the way that is appropriate for the partner country itself.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Trade Fair Manual in terms of opening and making understandable holistic fair process logic -Web Fair Tool - could be utilised also itself as a tool of collecting, evaluating and distributing best practices about complex problem-based projects and/or learning issues.

The vocabulary could be developed into independent learning material, maybe commercialised one, that helps, especially, the self-directed learners in work places understand the theoretical and practical questions and required answers that are necessary for planning and implementing theory and practice on strategy-led market activities.

Also the Process Guide seems to be quite innovative for further development. It includes the holistic view and describes the CASE trajectory and customised mental models that could be collected into

commercialised learning and working package. For instance, the process Guide is useful for product developers, innovators, process developers and students in adult education organisations that have real development or training projects with companies.

The partners could create a strategy and detailed plan how to develop the WFS further and how to market it as concept and single product modules. Also producing the German language version is quite important, because there are so many people in Europe speaking German. Still, the product requires quite a deep motivation and concentration in order to utilise the product in all its functional capacity. Further, it needs additional work by partners who will take in planned and promised way into real use.

Final Rating (0 to 10):: 7

Arvioija 2

Activities

Strengths:

- Despite of certain problems and limitations in the partner group, the actual development process has resulted in a high quality end product.
- The tool has been tested with vocational institutions and working life partners in real fair planning process cases. At the same time testing has served valorisation activities very well.

Weaknesses:

- Transnationality of the project has remained rather weak. Emphasis of the project activities has been clearly in Finland, partly due to above-mentioned reasons. The partner group could have been more extensive in the first place in order to ensure wider dissemination and impact of the project results. The products would benefit VET institutions and SMEs throughout Europe and therefore post-project valorisation activities are recommended.
- Dissemination activities according to documentation have been most active in Finland. There is very limited amount of information about activities in Spain or Sweden. What has been the impact of dissemination activities in the partner countries?
- Documentation of training the trainers is missing. The trainers' part was implemented in connection with testing mainly at Häme Polytechnic, there is no documentation of other partners' participation.

Products

Web Fair Tool

Strengths:

- user-friendliness: it makes learning interesting and individualised and supports student's learning process.
- the tool contains a variety of useful tools for fair planning and participation.
- it enables the student or SME employee to document the learning process with the help of digital portfolio function.
- transferability to different learning contexts by creating new contents.

Weaknesses:

- The competence part of the product was not delivered as foreseen. The objective of developing competence evaluation part was very challenging in the first place and the partner group did not manage to accomplish this. It was left for all partners to decide how to proceed with this after the project. The platform however contains a section for this.

- Product number 5 'Training the trainers' is also embedded in the main product (the tool). One could expect to see more documentation on the implementation of trainers' training during the project. This was obviously implemented in connection to piloting but there is no documentation on this.
- Producing the DE language version would have promoted the transferability in Europe.

General remarks:

- High quality product (content, pedagogic approach) that meets well the needs of the target group.
- Using piloting as a means of valorisation has been very effective way of introducing the tool to teachers, students and SMEs. In fact, using the tool in cooperation between schools and enterprises is probably the most effective way of usage also keeping in mind the pedagogic starting point of the product (problem based learning and project learning).

Process Guide

- The aim of the products was to comprise the process model with step by step analysis of the different phases of the project, the experienced difficulties and the practical knowledge gathered from the project. The power point slides contain interesting material though on the development process but it needs further development in order to serve as a Process Guide.
- It does not contain any instructions guiding the user through the development process. For example adding sound would improve the usability.
- The guide is serving mainly internal documentation of the project. Usability by teachers outside the project/partner organisations is not clear. There is no documentation on testing this product.

Added value, innovation & impact

- The project has developed new pedagogical approaches for learning fair planning and participation both in training institutions and in companies. The project has developed a learning environment and learning package for using trade fairs as an effective marketing tool. The process is divided into two sections (strategy of the organisation and fair project) providing a holistic view for the student and thus strengthening the learning process. The tool enables individualised learning both for students and SME employees planning fair participation. It takes into account different contexts and enables documenting learning that takes place at organisational level (handbook/digital portfolio method).
- The tool supports cooperation between vocational institutions and working life (the student can perform real tasks/projects for companies). Students testing the tool found it very useful, but less information is available in the final report on company point of view.
- The tool can also be used in other learning contexts and fields and thus the transferability of the products gives extra value.
- Post project activities relating to dissemination and valorisation are recommended, as the initial partner group was very limited. It is not clear what impact have the valorisation activities had so far.

Final Rating (0 to 10): 8