



instruction

UPSKILLING SCHOOL TEACHERS FOR
EDUCATION-WORK TRANSITION



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Recommendations for policy makers

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1. Piloting results

The piloting activities of the new tutoring model for the transition from the school to the world of work were assessed using an online survey. The survey comprised seven closed questions, employing a five point Likert scale from 'poor' to 'excellent', which were complemented with one open-ended question asking respondents to discuss the most useful information they learned from their training experience. These questions assessed the piloting activities in terms of content quality, course structure and objectives, perceived usefulness, support and interaction.

15 teachers provided feedback with over 90% stating that the quality of the materials, the working methods and the training efficacy was either very good or excellent. Likewise, more than 90% of the respondents found the tutor performance and the courses' utility for the future as very good or excellent. The taught concepts were understood by approximately 93% of the sample (14 out of 15 teachers), while 20% had not used any of the information they learned in the past. 33,3% of the participants were not confident in applying what they have learned, while 12 out of the 15 teachers (80%) felt that the piloting activities contributed to their personal development.

Looking at the qualitative feedback received through the open question, teachers argued that the training materials developed in INSTRUCTION will help them in the class to help students in their turn to plan and implement WBL activities. According to one of the respondents, the new WBL model is scientifically structured and comes to decisively assist the effective integration of students into the labor market. The suggested skills the teachers should own are one way to adapt the employee to the changing technological developments. Many teachers also recognized the usefulness of the training activities and stated that they will apply the knowledge and skills they gained in the near future, in order to organize similar activities in their schools.

In conclusion, the feedback collected after the piloting activities shows a lot of appreciation for what was developed in the INSTRUCTION project and its potential uses after the end of the project. This experience contributed strongly to the participants' personal and professional development. The vast majority of the teachers that participated in the training and piloting activities of the INSTRUCTION project agreed that it was very interesting to have the online training and after that apply in the class/extracurricular activities a better school-work transition.

2. Importance and opportunities to integrate the model into policies

Based on the feedback received from relevant stakeholders at the meetings that were organized in the project's partner countries, there are several opportunities to integrate different aspects of the innovative tutoring model into local, national and EU policies. In general, the importance of creating new work positions for WBL tutors



and structuring the internships or apprenticeship's activities based on the tutoring model's principles is highlighted.

2.1 The relevance to have a tutor in charge of the educational development of learners

According to Lithuanian stakeholders 'the creation of a tutor position at the school would be an advantage and benefit for the students'. Greek stakeholders also argued that a tutor dedicated to internship programs would be necessary for the process to run efficiently. The main responsibilities of such position would be to help students select and prepare for internships in companies, monitor and advise students on career issues, help them fill in required documents, discuss with them and their families and act as an intermediary in cooperation with employers.

While however the importance of having a permanent tutor for assisting students with their transition to the world of work, there are several main difficulties and obstacles that could arise when establishing a tutoring position in an educational institution. Lack of human resources, financial adequacy, workload and exemption from other teaching responsibilities comprise some of the challenging issues that need to be resolved. On the other hand, there are several issues that may hinder the process of supporting students in their internships/apprenticeships from the students' side. The main problem refers to the lack of adequate time to attend school-work transition supportive and orientation sessions as these are not considered in the schools' lesson schedules, which already are fairly intensive.

Moreover, taking into account the amount of students schools typically have, a question is raised regarding the number of students a school-work transition specialist could supervise and whether he/she would suffice to address the needs of all students. Obviously, more than one persons are needed to supervise the students and is recommended to train other teachers as well to be able to cover specific parts of the full set of the responsibilities a school-work transition specialist has.

What can be elicited from all stakeholders' meetings is that it is generally agreed that a dedicated position for assisting students in their internships/apprenticeships is very important and the activities foreseen in the INSTRUCTION tutoring model are considered as very useful. Specifically, the activities of all phases of the internship process are deemed quite important for an effective transition of students from education to work. The positive view of integrating the activities described by INSTRUCTION tutoring model into the school practices of all partner countries and building the responsibilities of respective tutors around them was pervasive.

2.2 The importance of internships or apprenticeships during training to facilitate the school-work transition – Advantages and disadvantages of the New Tutoring Model

The majority of the participants advocated the importance of having apprenticeships in the schools (and especially Vocational High Schools), with the adjustment of the



curricula and the inclusion of the apprenticeship in their syllabus, so that there are more specialty courses and students get ready for the job market through this WBL experience. Educational institutions should pay more attention to future professions, because it is really difficult for students to decide which profession to choose. Often even in the twelfth grade students do not know where to apply or where they want to work. WBL would greatly help students understand what would be of their interest and in which profession they could be more productive. This way they would be better prepared for the labour market, develop career competencies and facilitate the transition from school to work.

Participants in the stakeholders' meetings agreed that the tools of the tutoring model developed in the INSTRUCTION project would help students to better prepare for a career path. If it was possible to implement this model, students would have a great opportunity to get acquainted with the desired profession / work activity. The model would be particularly useful for those students with lower academic abilities, as such students would have the opportunity to become a specialist in the future, who would be motivated during the internship to enter the labor market after school or acquire an already tried and tested profession. A young person who is practically familiar with a particular job could decide if he or she will be able to work. After the internship, the student would know what knowledge and abilities/skills he/she lacks and it would be easier to understand which subjects, modules, non-formal education programs he/she should seek for and focus on.

Concerning Greece, the new model is seen as a tool to correct failures of the Greek apprenticeship system. It is a model of productive learning and a connection between theory and practice is achieved. The immediate result is the smooth integration of the apprentice in the company due to their specific skills and the preparation that has taken place. Continuous monitoring and control are the 'watchful eye' of the apprenticeship's acclimatization in the company and provide the feedback necessary to make adaptations throughout WBL. It is therefore evident that integrating the INSTRUCTION tutoring model in the apprenticeships would be highly beneficial for students. Implementing the developed activity plan in Greek schools would provide an opportunity of optimizing the apprenticeship process and improving the expected results.

Disadvantages of the tutoring model mainly include its duration and workload. Several concerns were raised under the fear of increasing the duration of studies from 3 to 4 years in Vocational High Schools in Greece for example. It is thus recommended to not alter the duration of studies, but find a way to integrate the foreseen activities in the framework of already established lesson schedules. Moreover, a major disadvantage of the model refers to the required study time as the workload is really high and it is not possible for the educational institution itself to decide to replace certain lessons (art, music or physical education) with suggested activities as these lessons are part of the general education of the students. The question arises as to how to reconcile a student's learning according to the general curricula and, for example, 2 months of internship, as educational institutions cannot adjust the educational process on their own? It is recommended that educational



policies are updated/changed, in order to apply a “modernized school” model with influences from the INSTRUCTION tutoring model as far as the internship process is concerned.

2.3 Supporting companies in managing an internship

The cooperation between school and companies and the analysis of their needs are considered unquestionable. Most employers said that the main problems were human, financial and time resources. A company should have an employee in charge of internships whose responsibilities would be limited to leading the internships themselves. Another challenging issue concerns responsibility for the safety of students. Moreover, organizational and legal issues involved in the admission of a minor to practice pose significant difficulties in the process. Employees are reluctant to take on the position of supervising the internship, as this is usually not part of their position, and such a person must be appointed to supervise the internship in order for students to become familiar with the specifics of the work, receive guidance and get assessed. Considering these challenges and the need to support companies in participating in internship initiatives and managing students some recommendations include the following:

- The state must sensitize and mobilize companies by giving them incentives for the allocation of more positions and the proper training of internships/apprenticeships, since they will be the employees of tomorrow.
- The company supervisors who are responsible for the reception and training of the students should be subsidized by the state.
- The internship/apprenticeship model should take into account the profile of the companies operating in each area so that it can be adequately adapted with benefits for both the students and the companies.
- The state should organize campaigns/events to publicize the internships/apprenticeships and its benefits to companies.
- Students should be subsidized by the company based on the work they offer and not by the state.

2.4 The training for tutors: specific skills and focused training

Probably the strongest potential of exploiting the INSTRUCTION tutoring model lies in the need to develop training programs for tutors that will support the internship process. The focus should be on the required competences and training material should be developed and adapted with the ultimate objective of building the required skill set of tutors. Such tutors, should not only be competent in the field of career education, but should possess several transversal/soft skills, such as empathy, communication and cooperation skills. It is recommended that:

- An institutionalized training model should be created by the state through educational providers, such as universities, that will include targeted training (e.g in adult education, monitoring of business programs, monitoring of



programs for the psychology of human resources etc.) so that the trainers can then properly prepare students not only in the cognitive field (hard skills) but also in the soft skills they must have when entering the labor market.

- There should be training by business people so that the internship trainer knows the needs of the labor market in order to properly guide the students in their transition to the labor market.

2.5 Tutoring model's adoption opportunities

As described in the previous sections, the opportunities of adopting the INSTRUCTION tutoring model in the schools are many and quite promising. Creating an internship workflow and streamlining the activities to achieve an effective transition from education to work is multifaceted and complex. Several aspects of the developed model can be very useful for supporting different parts and requirements of an internship process. For instance, the tutoring model's activity areas could provide the backbone of internship activities regardless of local and regional specificities, while the tutoring model's competences could serve as a reference point for creating training programs.

As identified by the Portuguese stakeholders, having a common internship model would be beneficial both for schools and companies. The companies mentioned that it would be easier if the models for the preparation, implementation and evaluation of internship results were similar, as this would facilitate the work and reduce the time involved in more administrative processes. The INSTRUCTION tutoring model could serve as the basis for creating a common internship framework. Furthermore, the schools stated that although they already had their processes well in place, many of the methodologies developed under this project can be implemented in their school in the future. Lastly, apart from the aforementioned opportunities to adopt the INSTRUCTION tutoring model at a local, regional and national level, an attempt to provide a common internship framework at a European level could also benefit from the INSTRUCTION tutoring model, while providing many benefits itself by creating wider career opportunities in larger and profession-rich labor markets.



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