

Chapter 20

Curriculum Development, Implementation and Evaluation of Project Integrated Online Training

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ABSTRACT

New project management skills and processes are prerequisites to meet the challenges of the globalization. Enterprises, companies and institutions that are operating in transnational and distributed ICT projects on global market need highly qualified project-managers for virtual collaboration. Most training organizations and certification programs focus only on classical soft and technical skills. Participants and most important managers of distributed projects however need training and practice in virtual collaboration and intercultural aspects to be able to consider international socio-cultural issues encountered in business. Therefore, the target of Pool2Business (P2B) was to establish on the one hand a modular online course to address certain specific requirements and qualifications of a company as well language and culture specific differences between participants and on the other hand to ensure with Project Integrated Training parts that the learning outcomes can be immediately used in practical application. By following an adapted and extended ADDIE Model, the P2B-Consortium was able to establish the whole Curriculum more effectively by having the same strategies, following the same procedures and knowing the next steps to fulfill the target of P2B.

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ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

The POOL2Business project consortium, a cluster of European industries and universities (realised by a European funded Lifelong Learning Programme project), has been established to put Project Organisation Online (POOL) processes into practice. It aims to enhance existing project management practices combining technical skills with soft skills in a virtual environment. The project assumes ICT systems to establish project collaboration merely virtually through the use of online communication and collaboration technology. By connecting projects virtually, the consortium ensures more secure, consistent and economical collaboration in project transactions.

The P2B Consortium (<http://www.pool2business.eu>) consists of five universities: FH Salzburg- University of Applied Science (Austria), University of Alicante (Spain), Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (Ireland), Kaunas College (Lithuania), Technical University of Cluj-Napoca (Romania) three small enterprises: Cockpit Consulting (Austria), Badegruber & Partner GmbH (Austria), IREAS Institute for structural policy (Czech Republic) with research focus and several promoting international companies as Hewlett Packard and Skidata from the engineering sector. The consortium ensures the innovative, international approach and the quality of the outcomes. The focus of the university partners was to develop the training program and the assessment as well the certification processes. The three enterprises have taken a key role in the analyzing phase of the target group and also in the transformation of the innovative approach to the companies and organizations. To get close to the target-group, four companies from engineering sector have supported the project-team. To guarantee the international acceptance chambers of commerce of each country provided their facilities to the project.

SETTING THE STAGE

The P2B Curriculum design followed a skills-based approach to accommodate the special focuses on work-orientation. Therefore, firstly competency profiles have been developed based on real-life tasks reflecting current work practices. The consultation and involvement of practitioners (industry partners) at early stage of the needs analysis as well as in the final evaluation phase was then a major guarantor for the appropriateness of the training units.

The approach reflects the findings and standardized procedures as provided in the ADDIE Model (Molenda, M. & Pershing, J., 2004; Bichelmeyer, B. A., 2005) which consists of 5 phases, namely

- Analysis
- Design
- Development
- Implementation
- Evaluation,

and the work of the IEEE Learning Technology Standards Committee (LTSC). The operational execution of the curriculum design phases has been embedded in a project management and quality assurance procedure. The content and tasks of the 5 phases, which have to be fulfilled, are as below:

Needs Analysis

In the first phase the actual needs are determined and a set of job-related tasks are defined, which the training should refer to. It is crucial in this phase to get feedback from the labor market through questionnaires, surveys, and focus group interviews so that the curriculum is oriented towards and reflects the actual real-life workplace situation. So the industry partners, one of the main target groups, are already involved at this early stage.

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