

Titel:**Successful Blended Learning Projects in 2006:
Experiences in different formal, non-formal and informal learning environments****Executive Summary:**

European partners from 11 countries working in the framework of the “blended learning institutions’ cooperative „blinc” have been applying web-based, mixed learning methodologies for different learning groups and contexts in 3 different projects.

The project **INTEGRATION** deals with intercultural staff training for organisations working with multiethnic clients and beneficiaries.

Nine partners from six nations have been developing audiovisual learning and training materials. This was done by using video-graphic approaches in intercultural training, by analysing given situations of intercultural encounters in a critical incident approach and by producing and documenting "intercultural micro-communications" as short online films.

In the framework of the project “**JEM!**” - Joint Environmental Management funded by the SOCRATES Joint Actions programme partners from 5 countries applied an eCoaching-System for the introduction of environmental management in European schools. The content of the system consists of full fledged courses, training materials and accompanying guidelines for teachers, trainers or consultants.

The applied system used in JEM! was developed in the framework of a project “IEM in hospitals” that was awarded as one of best 5 projects out of 2.500 since 1992.

In the framework of **JEM!** the approach was transferred to European schools.

Training and counselling is performed using blended learning approaches and the entire system can be accessed on the interactive project website.

Both projects are examples how innovative, IT-aided learning concepts can be realized in various formal and informal learning environments with different learning groups, contents and objectives. They clearly showed that the success is to a major extend determined by the quality of the applied instructional design in the blended learning contexts.

That’s why the project **A-B-C-D** (Advanced Blended Learning and Didactics) (Grundtvig 1.1, 2005-2007) is aiming at the development of a comprehensive training course for “Blended Learning Designers”.

In May and September 2007 the courses will be carried out in Athens (GR) and Bordeaux (FR), introduced by a preliminary eLearning phase. The course will also offer opportunities to develop individual blended learning projects using Web 2.0 tools like blogs, WIKI, ePortfolios and synchronous web-communication instruments like online-conferences or skype.

Main Text: Case studies

Project 1:

Blended learning in informal learning situations:

INTEGRATION - Intercultural Dialogue for a Multicultural Society in Europe

Faced with changes in the demographic and cultural composition of societies, educating people towards the acceptance and emergence of a multicultural society has become a necessity to prevent xenophobia and racism. In this framework the role of

intercultural education is of crucial importance with the aim of fostering tolerance, understanding and respect among groups and individuals.



In the framework of the project INTEGRATION, we have been striving for improving the intercultural competencies of pedagogical staff and teachers in different institutional environments in Europe and their target groups by founding an information and material pool, which is available to all experts working in the third sector and which is used to sustainably affect sensitisation of societies and politics.

An intercultural training course for staff members has been developed aiming at enabling staff members to be more proficient in interacting with people from different cultures and to be able to activate migrants in taking part and in organising intercultural events themselves.



The course is based on the 20 instructional design models according to the Goettinger Catalogue of Didactic Models focussing relevant models on multiethnic learning groups and combines different learning methodologies such as eLearning and face-to-face learning.

The training course (train the trainer) consists of four major elements:

1. Casuistic approach in intercultural documentation and intercultural training: critical incidents, culture assimilator, culture categories, topics, keywords, description of multicultural settings for collecting reports within an institution and for preparing specific training material or a data base.
2. Survey approaches in intercultural documentation and intercultural training: questionnaires on needs of clients and staff, questionnaires on culture orientation for collection surveys.
3. Simulation/gaming approaches in intercultural documentation and intercultural training: role playing on intercultural experiences, theories and models of intercultural development, encounters in intercultural or multicultural situations.
4. Video-graphic approaches in intercultural documentation and intercultural training: seeing and reflecting given situations of intercultural encounters and of cultural settings, producing and documenting "intercultural micro-communications".

The partners have been testing all different elements themselves for feedback in order to eventually improve the course elements. They have become multipliers within their teams and with their newly acquired competencies have identified training

needs and developed specific training material which meets the special needs of their target groups. One focus was the development of web-based learning sequences that are placed on an open source-based learning platform. By introducing the new technologies as training and communication instrument, the project promotes innovative ways of training and facilitates the access to intercultural learning.

The partnership

The partnership consists of 9 institutions working in the third sector (social and healthcare sector) in 6 European countries.

The German contractor is the **BUPNET It. Goettingen**, an adult education provider and European project management and consulting agency. Beyond the conception, development and realisation of European projects, BUPNET offers vocational training courses in various thematic fields aiming at the social integration of unemployed and the improvement of competences of employed people. Its main activities in the project were the project management, project controlling, IT-technology and customising: web-serving, supply of the eLearning system and the training of trainers.

Pädagogische Seminar der Georg-August University Goettingen, DE, the faculty of education is a well known pedagogical institution dealing with programmed learning and intercultural learning. The head of the institute, Prof. Dr. H.-D. Haller has been working in the field of pedagogical research and teaching for more than 25 years. He developed the Goettinger Katalog of Didactic Models and works in various projects with migrants and disadvantaged groups of the society. The main activities in the projects were project evaluation and didactical advice.

Paritätische Kindergarten Grone, Goettingen, Germany is a typical example for the German reality: The kindergarten is situated in a social hot spot; almost 20% of the population are foreign citizens. In the Kindergarten this percentage is about 75%. As a consequence the kindergarten staff very actively has to support these children to enable them to use all the various possibilities for learning and advancing in order to develop bi-cultural competence and cultural openness. Its main focus in the project was beyond the development of training material for staff members, the development of informal learning activities for the families.

Sure Start Health Development Team, NHS, Swansea, Wales, UK is working as a sub-programme of the National Health Service to respond to the identified needs of individuals, families and their children in recognised communities in order to facilitate early learning, improve social development and maximise health potential. Sure Start offers services for the production and delivery of cultural diversity training programmes for healthcare and other professionals to enable them to work appropriately with its client groups. Its main activities in the project were the development and testing of a diversity training package for staff members.

GIP FIPAN, Nice, France is part of the professional training network of the Académie de Nice; its activities are centred on the professionalizing and formation of trainers and on the optimisation of education systems through consulting, auditing and training services and the development of pedagogic instruments. The main focus in the project was the development of an intercultural training approach for teacher and trainers and their Maghreb target groups.

INSUP Formation, Bordeaux, France is a non-profit training institution consisting of 15 branches involved in the social and professional integration of young people and adults in the framework of European and national public training schemes. The main focus in the project was the development and realisation of a training based on an integration project of artistic creation for young people with a low qualification level.



The Società cooperativa Il Ghetto, Cagliari, Sardinia, Italy supplies expert advice and supports didactic structures approaching school age youngsters and offers professional formation courses (with or without recognition), individual and collective updates courses according to the needs and characteristics of the customers. Its main activities in the project were the development of web-based training and information modules for migrants coming to live in Sardinia in cooperation with a group of migrants.

Växjö kommun, Sweden is the local authority of Växjö and offers adult education in different levels, from literacy to further education both theoretical and vocational. It also works with Swedish courses for immigrants and with training courses for students with mental and physical disabilities. The adult education offers guidance and counselling before and during studies as well as courses and student support. Its main activity in the projects was the introduction of new approaches in existing training offers for migrants.

The Centre of Multicultural Education, University of Latvia, Riga belongs to the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology. The aims and tasks of the Centre are closely connected not only with teachers' training but also with the research of education processes and the integration of topical tendencies of the society into the development of the faculty. The Centre carries out research projects and further education programmes for teachers in the fields of multicultural, multilingual, and civic education. Its main focus in the project was the linguistic integration of minorities in Latvia.

On December 8th, 2006, all transnational partners and German local partners were invited to celebrate the final conference of the 2-year project INTEGRATION. In the focus of the conference was not only the presentation of the project results but also the sharing of experiences with an international audience. Each partner presented its specific training approach and illustrated its results in an exhibition and audiovisual presentations. Among the visitors were representatives of local associations working in the field of integration, stakeholders from the local and regional administration, the Ministry of Culture, training institutes, University and the press.

www.integration-eu.org

Project 2: JEM! Blended learning in formal and non-formal learning: Introduction of Environmental Management in European schools

The project **JEM!** (Joint Environmental Management) has been aiming at the sustainable development of the environment awareness of young people in 5 regional European school networks.



The regional government of Kassel, Germany has coordinated the project– the partners have been educational institutions from the regions Szigetszentmiklos (Budapest, Hungary), Vienna (Austria), Cagliari/Sardinia, Italy), Nice (France) and Boleslawowo (Gdansk, Poland) as well as partner schools and other locally committed institutions located in the administrative district of Kassel.

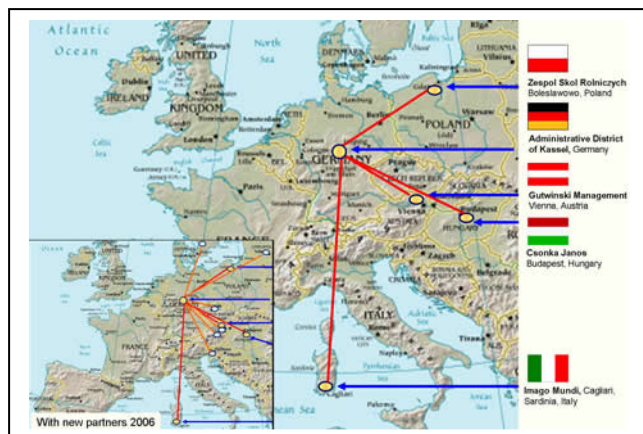


Fig. 1: The **JEM!** - project regions in Europe 2004 and 2006

The core of the model project has been the development of a new and more attractive presentation of schools and education by focussing on an extracurricular environmental topic (environmental protection). In this connection external stakeholders as well as up-to-date internet-based learning methods and instruments have been deliberately included for the European exchange.

In **JEM!** innovative learning has been concretely realised for the target groups of students, youths and young adults under the umbrella of environmental management.

Against this background the European Commission promoted the pilot project for a period of 2 years in the framework of its educational programme Joint Actions.

The Participating Parties

The participating stakeholders of each of the schools (pupils, teachers, parents, staff members of training and consulting institutions, NGOs (non-governmental organisations) as well as associations and regional corporations) act as multipliers, who positively influence their personal environment towards a better environmental awareness.

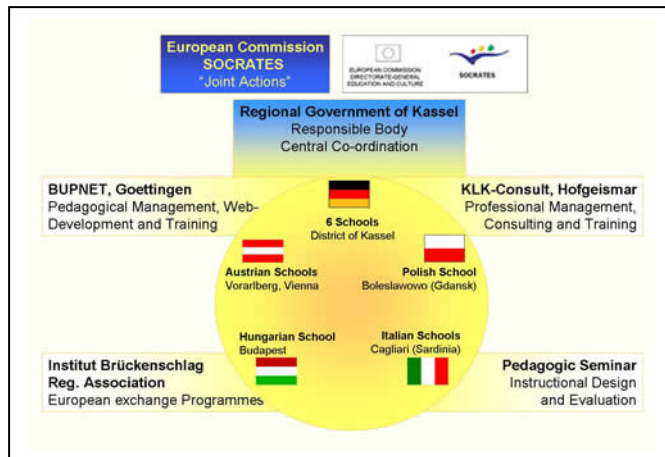


Fig. 2: : **JEM!** – project-structure

The **participating schools** have introduced an environmental management system and applied the web-based coaching and learning system.

They have been supported by the co-ordinators of the regional network (environmental administration) as well as by professional environmental consultants and other participating stakeholders on a local level (e.g. the supervisory school authority). The consulting regarding the introduction of an environmental management system has been done via an internet-based learning and consulting instrument (“Learning Management System“).

Introduction of an Environmental Management System

An environmental management system (EMS) is a professional management instrument which systematically aligns the organisation of the school as well as procedures and activities of the schools with an environmentally friendly behaviour. Basing on this system all environmental media and material flows become transparent and the environmental awareness is improved. Experiences with EMS so far have shown that the consumption of resources can be reduced.

The speciality of the project is the fact that it is the school boys and girls who, as environmental management members, develop the EMS together with a selected teacher (environmental management responsible) and who establish it in their schools.

During their daily routine the young persons gain knowledge regarding the eco-friendly handling of resources and – by means of extracurricular training – acquire a positive attitude towards an active civic engagement.

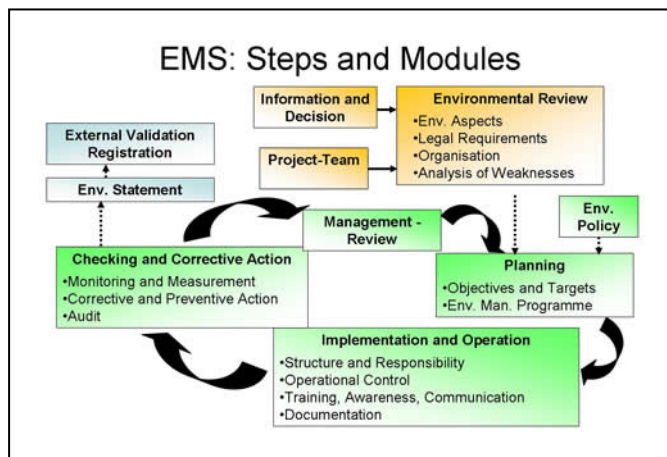


Fig. 3: Illustration of the steps involved in an EMS

Above all they gain know-how and competencies regarding modern management and are actively working together with their European schoolmates via internet.

Working Structure of the Project

The project was placed on 3 pillars:

1. Introduction of environmental management systems in the schools of the partner regions
2. Development of blended learning units for teachers and instructors as well as for students
3. Technological and organisational development to achieve sustainability in a European networking process.

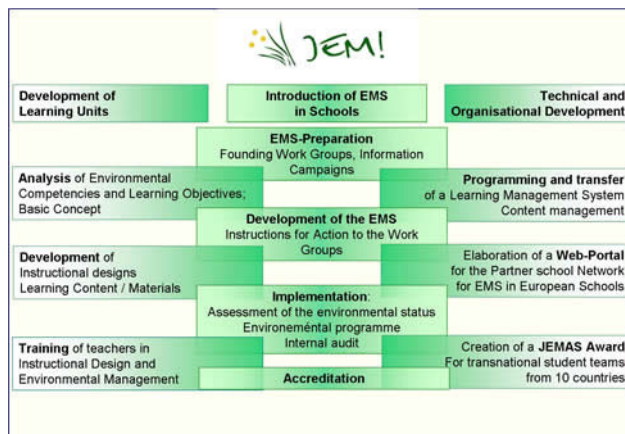


Fig. 4: **JEM!** Work-packages and project structure

The 3 work packages were interlinked and reached their envisaged aims and outputs.

Outputs and results:

A comprehensive course with more than 30 subchapters relating to the introduction of EMS was established in German and Italian language and shall be translated in other languages by the JEM!- partners in the growing network.

The whole system consists of a complete set of 15 development steps for the introduction of an EMS in a school with various online materials and a parallel instructional online-guide for teachers and instructors.

12 teachers from 4 countries participated in training courses on environmental management.

All participating schools are on their way to a successful implementation and reached the stage of “internal audit”. In the course of the project the project team set up a collaboration with the Austrian environmental label (Umweltzeichen) to transfer and adapt a good and feasible accreditation system and to avoid the re-invention of the wheel.

Apart from the environmental and IT-related aspects the development of good and feasible approaches for instructional designs was in the centre of the project. In this context training concepts and learning materials have been developed and teachers (the environmental officers) were trained in the framework of a workshop on the European level.

Again it was revealed that not the technical development is the limiting factor to introduce new learning methodologies and instruments (blended learning) but missing didactic competencies by teachers, trainers and consultants.

In order to achieve the widest European dissemination of the model project possible a multilingual internet portal was developed for the **JEM!** network with interactive instruments like an online self-assessment tool to inquire about the status of the school concerning environmental management.

The project ended in a large transnational event in Vienna in November 2006 bringing together 30 committed students from 9 European countries and another 30 stakeholders from schools, educational institutions and other institutions and associations.



Participants of the JEMAS Award in Vienna

The first so called JEMAS award for students from 12 selected European schools was developed and organised in Vienna. Mixed transnational student teams participated in a “Games without frontiers-parcours” in the Vienna Business Academy. Preliminary to the event more than 3.000 schools all over Europe were invited to apply for participation.

www.jem-eu.org

For both projects audiovisual documentations will be available on DVDs by the end of January and can be ordered via www.blinc-eu.org.

Project 3: A-B-C-D Competencies for blended learning designers

The project **A-B-C-D** (Advanced Blended Learning Competencies and Didactics) (Grundtvig 1.1, 2005-2007) is aiming at the development of a comprehensive training course for “Blended Learning Designers”.

In May and September 2007 the courses will be carried out in Athens (GR) and Bordeaux (FR), introduced by a preliminary eLearning phase. The course will also offer opportunities to develop individual blended learning projects using Web 2.0 tools like blogs, WIKI, ePortfolios and synchronous web-communication instruments like online-conferences or skype.

The course is developed for teachers, authors, tutors consultants and other educational experts who want to introduce blended learning offers in their daily routine. The course will convey the necessary instructional design and IT-competencies. There is the opportunity for an individual funding for the participants through the Grundtvig 3 programme.



Background of project and courses

Especially for large parts of adult education it becomes more and more obvious that combined teaching methodologies containing mixed systems of face-to-face learning and eLearning (blended learning) best take into account the possibilities and needs of the target groups.

New media are the basis for extended ways and possibilities of learning implied in the keyword eLearning. eLearning particularly allows an adjustment to the spatial and temporal conditions of the learners and as a consequence always improves the participation of larger social groups in the educational process across different levels of qualification, subjects and phases.

The project A-B-C-D ties up to previous experiences with eLearning and works out a training concept for the development of competencies in special didactics of blended learning.

The resulting course enables stakeholders of adult education to develop and realise combined training faster and more extensive and to some degree at a higher, comparable quality level.

Objectives:

The course aims at developing competencies in special didactics of blended learning and enables the participants to develop and realise training courses with a blended learning approach. The course not only transmits technical know-how, but especially instructional design competencies focused on mixed learning arrangements.

The course itself will be developed as a blended learning concept in order to establish the immediate experience with the methodology.

Course Phases

Preliminary Phase:

In the preliminary phase, which starts 6 weeks prior to the face-to-face session, participants get basic information about blended learning. They have the first opportunity to get to know their course colleagues.

By doing so, they already get into contact with various technical tools suitable for blended learning courses (skyping and online rooms) as well as with new learning environments (learning management systems).

Participants get the necessary information to successfully use those tools and instruments and are supported by experienced tutors.

Face-to-Face Session:

In the face-to-face session, technical and instructional knowledge are transmitted by using different didactical methodologies. Moreover, a project work is initiated which will be finalised during the follow-up phase in eLearning and eCoaching.

Follow-up Phase

The participants continue to work in a collaborative approach on their blended learning course using again communication tools and eLearning environments. The work will be supported by an online tutor. Regular online sessions give the participants the opportunity to get advice and information from other group members and the tutor and will promote an exchange of experiences and good practice.

As far as Information and Communication Technologies are concerned there will be a special emphasis on “social software” for communication and collaboration purposes like open source weblogs, WIKIs, ePortfolios, learning landscapes, skype and online conferencing tools.

Programme Day-by-Day (f2f-session)

Day 1

Administrative issues and cultural background

Presentation of the course programme, the agenda and the methodological approach

Presentation of participants and their educational backgrounds

IM 1: Instructional design module 1

Instructional models will be introduced already in the preliminary phase via eLearning.

PM 1: Project module 1:

Course Design 1 – Didactic frame

Setting up a project simulation: Preparation of project work and introduction to tasks and frame conditions. The participants plan their own blended learning course to directly apply newly acquired knowledge in a practical work.

Day 2

IM 2: Introduction to the course design

Creation of awareness: “Technology is not enough”

TM 1: Technical workshop module 1

Introduction to blog and WIKI

PM 2

Course Design 2 – Content/ competencies list

Development of an exemplary course structure with a list of topics in connection with learning objectives (aspired competencies)

Day 3

IM 3: Instructional design including traditional teaching strategies as well as educational technology and media didactics.

TM 2: Introduction to the internal LMS/Moodle

EM1 Evaluation module:

Introduction to evaluation methods and instruments (evaluation toolbox)

PM 3:

Course Design 3 – Sequencing a BL course

Definition of a course sequence (timetable), course structure, interlinkages

Day 4

Competency frameworks: Competencies for course design and development, determination of learning outcomes, requirements/prerequisites and learning milestones

TM 3: Introduction to the internal LMS/Moodle 2

PM 4:

Course Design 4 – Content development

Elaboration of exemplary learning units

Development of eLearning materials

Day 5

EM 2: Evaluation toolbox

PM 5:

Course Design 5 – Presentation, discussion and follow up

Finalisation of exemplary learning units and preparation of presentations

Presentation and discussion of interim results of work groups

Tasks for follow-up-phase and instructions (regular online meetings)

Course evaluation

All necessary information and application documents are available at the website:

www.abcd-eu.org

References

Additional information links, LMS and related documents are available on these websites:

Websites:

www.integration-eu.org

www.jem-eu.org

www.abcd-eu.org