

Outcome of the “Brainwalk” activity – Workshop notes

The workshop activity “brainwalk” was used to review the proposed mentor training programme.

Modules and learning outcomes

- **Who is doing mentoring in Higher Education?** Academic directors of study programs, lecturers, tutors of specific modules/lectures within a study programs
- **The role of mentors in higher education:** Advising mentees, observe and evaluate the learning process and its outcomes according to learning outcomes, formative and summative feedback, stimulate reflection, helping students to connect theory and practice, opening networks and contacts for mentees, giving input of academic nature, communicating with mentors from companies/higher education about progress of mentees.
- **Who is doing mentoring in companies?** Depends of context of the company (SME? Big company? Enough resources?). Usually middle management is involved in mentoring, it depends on the professional, social and communicative competence of prospect mentors.
- **The role of mentors in companies:** Similar like that of higher education mentors, except that they also need to create a learning environment in the company and learning opportunities for mentees, they need to give professional input.
- **What do mentors need to know/be able to do?**
 - How does university work? (ECTS, learning outcomes, curriculum)
 - How to create a learning environment at work?
 - Didactical competence
 - Communicative competence
 - Digital competence
 - Diversity
 - Social competence
 - Professional competence
 - Academic competence
 - (criteria-led) observance and evaluation of learning process as well as learning product
 - Connection between theory and practice
 - Supporting autonomous learning of mentees
 - Creating learning contracts with higher education institution, workplace and mentee

The Learning process of mentees

- Ideal as proposed (cycle-model based on formative and summative feedback and assessment)
- ePortfolio useful
- Ability to set learning outcomes and priorities in learning and working
- Awareness of learning process and reflection important (peers, mentors)
- Collection of digital artefacts to make learning explicit (emergent learning gets visible)

Delivery of mentor training

- Blended learning
- cMOOCs
- not compulsive
- learner-centred activities

- exchange of experiences
- creation of network
- experiencing the learning cycle model (learning model for mentees) themselves
- using the ePortfolio approach
- including prior learning – no need to do things twice, modular system
- Practical examples and exercises, discussions

Assessment and certification

- Open Online Course, certification as an option but not a must
- Formative Feedback during the course
- Summative exam at the end of the training: Reflection, knowledge-tests, validation from prior learning (eg. mentoring experiences from leisure time or third sector)
- Certification needs acceptance by employers and higher education institutions
- No “empty” certificates, eg. participation certificates
- Bodies for certification: Higher Education, commercial chambers

German Summary available at:

https://padlet.com/isabell_grundschober/apprent_eu,

<https://isabellgru.eu/index.php/2018/12/18/was-ist-die-rolle-von-mentorinnen-im-dualen-studium/>,

<https://www.donau-uni.ac.at/de/departament/imb/news/id/27421/index.php?URL=/de/aktuell>.

Workshop Reflection

The definition and the way of implementation of dual study programs were very different between participants of the workshop. The first half of the workshop was therefore dedicated to defining dual study programs, discovering that there are study programs with strong dual features but with no official identification as “dual study” or “higher apprenticeship”. The term “higher apprenticeship” was not used in German language during the workshop and in general in the communication for the project in Austria, as in its translation it leads to misunderstandings. “Dual study” is clearer. But also the term “dual study” is not completely clear and could mean many things in practice. The mind-sets are very different behind the term.

Role of the mentor

During the workshop it became clear, that during the ApprEnt project, the role of the mentor wasn't clearly defined. The role of the mentor is highly context bound. It was also difficult to define the role during the workshop, as the mind-sets, the conditions and needs of companies regarding dual study programs vary strongly. Depending on the size and structure of the company, the mentor has different roles. In some companies, they might be in charge of creating a learning environment; in other companies an HR department is responsible for this and overall management of dual study-issues with employees.

Company mind-sets regarding dual study programs

Some companies expect that their employees educate themselves on higher levels in their free time. The connection between learning at the workplace and theory/academia is wanted, but not necessarily as part of the employee's working time.

Other companies understood the benefit of dual study programs, which are both rooted in learning experiences in the company as well as in the higher education institution. They see the dual study program as an investment into the HR of the company and its future success.

In the end, it is a question of financial resources and of awareness about this investment into the employees.

Different needs and conditions

During the workshop it became obvious, that the needs and conditions of companies are very different. There are differences between big companies, even bigger differences between big companies and SMEs and between SMEs.

Workshop Dissemination

(Promotion before and follow-up after the workshop)

- <https://isabellgru.eu/index.php/2018/09/25/podcast-no-3-duales-studium/>
- <https://isabellgru.eu/index.php/2018/10/04/mentoring-im-dualen-studium/>
- <https://isabellgru.eu/index.php/2018/12/18/was-ist-die-rolle-von-mentorinnen-im-dualen-studium/>
- <https://www.donau-uni.ac.at/de/departement/imb/news/id/27421/index.php?URL=/de/aktuell>
- on Twitter at #ApprEnt_EU and at Austrian ApprEnt Facebook Discussion Group [“Dual studieren in Österreich”](#)