



Learn.Empowerment

Self-directed Learning for Low-skilled Unemployed People

Catalogue for Funding Policy and Tender Specifications

Executive Summary

“How can innovative project results be transferred into the funded training mainstream?”

Self-directed learning enables and supports the development of personally and socially relevant self-management competences. It strengthens self-confidence and leads thus to the ability to act in an emancipated and secure way in the social and work environment. Especially target groups who have no affinity to and no experience with learning – and these are the target groups the project is focussing upon – connect “learning” with failure, imposition and with no perspective, because they could not experience learning as useful and valuable for themselves.

To contribute to the implementation of self-directed learning into regular trainings the partnership elaborated an analysis of European tender specifications. This „Catalogue for Funding Policy and Tender Specifications“ presents models how the formulation tenders concerning provision of vocational education and training measures should be designed in order to allow for innovative didactic principles which require higher degrees of flexibility than traditional methods.

In all partner countries public policies focus on the «return to employment» for a maximum of clients attending training courses. Further more the aim of Life Long Learning and the sustainability of training outcomes are mentioned. However criteria to measure and appreciate quality of activities or services provided are quite diverse.

In most cases there is no obvious restriction to innovative approaches and Self-directed Learning in particular. Nevertheless, barriers are quite present through the lack of flexibility imposed by conditions of implementation. Also misunderstandings concerning innovative learning approaches and methods have to be removed. They concern different topics and fields and are answered by the partnership,

All project partners agree on the importance of the trainer's role. It is necessary for her / him to be trained to the innovative approach. Trainer's resistances count into the barriers of SDL implementation.

Country-specific regulations

In the UK, tendering offers the opportunity for flexible approaches to learning in that the precise way of learning is not laid down, although monitoring and attendance are. The following are examples:

1. A Contract to deliver New Deal for Lone Parent provision, known as Discovery Events is being put out to tender by Jobcentre Plus. The successful bidder will be required to deliver four Discovery Events from September / October 2006 to March 2008. Each Discovery Event should last for a minimum of ten hours for a maximum of 20 Jobcentre Plus lone parent customers per event. Delivery should be timed to suit the lone parents childcare responsibilities and should be flexible enough to meet the needs of individual lone parents.
2. Specifications for a New Deal for young people programme in Berkshire (2006) included the necessity for providers to have enough Internet-linked computers for all clients to perform job search online; full access for all participants to all relevant activities; a robust system to monitor and track them both during and after the programme; but specified that registration had to be completed twice a day so as to ensure attendance. Apart from this requirement, flexibility in teaching/learning is not addressed.
3. Invitation to tender for programme centres for lone parent provision in the West Midlands region (2006) demands answers to the following: how you will deliver each element of the service requirements; how you intend to identify and address the individual needs of each customer, including those most disadvantaged; how you will support customers through provision and into work; please outline how you would ensure the provision is of a consistently high standard and that output objectives are achieved by all staff, including staff of any partners or sub-contractors; please outline what evaluation and monitoring systems you will put in place to ensure that the provision, including any provision delivered by sub-contractors, is meeting the needs of all customers; please indicate where all the delivery premises would be sited with addresses including any sub-contractor premises, what facilities are or would be available at this/these locations, and why you consider that this/these locations are suitable for this particular provision; please detail what equipment and resources are available for customer use. Note that no requirements are laid down for ways of learning.

4. Generic specification for New Deal for Young People and New Deal 25 Plus (2006): Relevant extracts: 'Although the Generic Specification and Provision Annexes outline the basic elements that must be delivered, prospective providers are encouraged to submit proposals that are innovative and flexible in their approach. Proposals must meet the needs of all participants including both mandatory and voluntary customers. The overall aim of Jobcentre Plus provision is to help participants improve their employability and ultimately to find and keep jobs. Within this overall aim, different types of provision are designed to tackle the various barriers which unemployed people face in finding and keeping work. ' Furthermore, it demands 'high quality provision tailored to meet individual participant and local labour market needs ... delivery of provision on premises in locations, which are easily accessible to participants ... Premises must be of a high standard, offer a professional, business-like environment and be able to cope with the expected throughput of people. They should provide dedicated areas where groups can work without distractions from others and areas for quieter one to one discussions, job search activity etc. ... maintain comprehensive and accurate attendance records for participants.'



Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci



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Project promotor and coordinator: BEST Institut für berufsbezogene Weiterbildung und Personaltraining GmbH, Dr. Wolfgang Eisenreich, Mariahilfer Straße 8, 1070 Wien

Web: www.best-training.com

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