TeaCamp scenario for Virtual Mobility

TeaCamp Work Package 7

This document describes the scenario of virtual mobility recommended for the exploitation strategy.

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Virtual Mobility Exploitation Scenario

Introduction

The following document describes the scenario for the exploitation of the project TeaCamp. Here the TEACHING AND LEARNING VIRTUAL MOBILITY SCENARIO is described, as well as the administrative, academic, curricular and technological requirements of the platform.

Context

- **Course/Subject** given in the accredited studies that the University offers.

- The **scenario of the teaching-learning** involves the completion of this course/subject in virtual mobility form.

- There should be a **curricular credit recognition** for the student and merit recognition for the teacher.

- Both, the teacher and the student should obtain a **cultural background**.

- There should be a feedback about the quality of the teaching-learning process.

- The possibilities for academic and social activities (research) should be organized in the framework of the virtual mobility.

- Different forms of the combined virtual and physical mobility (blended learning) should be proposed.

VIRTUAL MOBILITY CONCEPT

TeaCamp project aims to explore a new concept of Virtual Mobility (VM) on the premise that virtual mobility should be considered as an alternative to physical mobility or as a complement or a preparation for it. Currently, Virtual Mobility has the ability to reach a large number of students and therefore must be analyzed in depth with a view to their integration into our educational systems. VM is also good for teachers, they can obtain a cultural feedback and learning and research relationship in a easy way. Moreover it can complement programs as Erasmus.

Teacamp project, in accordance with the glossary of the elearningeuropa.info portal, defines Virtual Mobility as:

"The use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to obtain the same benefits as one would have with physical mobility but without the need to travel"[1].

This project understands that virtual mobility is also the possibility of developing a study program at national or international level related to the training area of the student, through the methodology of distance education, because of this it is important to known that Virtual Mobility does not only represents the use of tools and approaches allowing the transfer of knowledge because then we would talk about e-learning or Distance Learning.

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[1] http://www.elearningeuropa.info

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In a virtual mobility course, in addition to obtain the credits granted by the host universities and acquire specific skills of the subject or subjects selected, the student obtains other important academic skills like: increase his knowledge about other cultures, language, different educational systems and acquisition of technological skills, etc. The achievement of these goals demonstrates the educational value of virtual mobility. In this kind of mobility we must not forget the teachers that, in addition to organizing the coordination of the mobility or sharing their subject with others country teachers, they will also obtain cultural knowledge from other colleagues and students.

Definition of virtual mobility has been explored during other EU projects (Movinter, MoveIT[2] project, and others). According to Movinter[3] these are some important elements within Virtual Mobility:

- Interactivity and communication between students and teachers from different countries: It is fundamental that students are encouraged to and actually work with fellow students and/or teachers from other nationalities. This cooperation intends that participants not only learn the specific content of the course but also other cultural issues to promote intercultural interaction. It is important to provide students and teachers with all the necessary tools to foster this communication. Tools like e-mail, chat, videoconferencing, etc.

- International Teaching Group: Participating lecturers and tutors should belong to institutions from different countries in order to guarantee that different national and cultural perspectives are available to the learners.

- Multicultural exchange: Ensure the learning diversity of cultural perspectives creating activities and resources for this purpose.

- Appropriate technological solutions: To ensure the virtual mobility, ICT must be available to our students and teachers. Tools of distance learning like learning platforms, forums, chat, wiki, videoconferencing, etc and furthermore other tools in web 2.0 to promote social interaction such as social networking, social bookmarking, etc.

- Joint choice of the subject to be studied through VM: It would be interesting to propose activities and subjects related to the culture of different countries. Include courses or activities about History, implementation of international law in different countries, comparative literature, policy and social issues, environment, education, public health, etc. (and in general all address issues related to the well-being of the population) This issues contribute to improve the learning about intercultural information.

- Joint curricula design: It is needed in order to coordinate the educational offer of the universities which participate in the mobility. The correct identification of complementarities between HEIs and partners promotes a sense of a shared goal with shared responsibilities and outcomes. Thanks to this active, we obtain participation of all partners; HEIs develop a real cooperation experience.

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[2] http://move-it.europace.org/
[3] http://www.vertebralcue.org/images/stories/movinter_white_paper.pdf

- Joint titles: it is necessary an agreement among the participating institutions to deliver a joint certificate o recognized credits at the end of the program. This is a powerful motivation factor which allows participants to credit the virtual mobility experience as a fully recognized part of an academic or training experience and achievement.

- Teachers' participation: it's also necessary to recognize the teachers participation, both as coordinator and as virtual visitors –sharing a subject with other country teachers o offering their subject for the experience. This recognition must be made both ways, in the teachers curricula and in the additional effort the teacher must to do to participate.

After analyzing all these elements and characteristics of virtual mobility, it can be defined as:

Virtual mobility offers the students the possibility of taking a course in another country through the use of ICTs, apart from obtaining the credits granted by the host universities and acquire specific skills of the subject selected, the students will obtain important academic skills such as: knowing other cultures, language, different education systems and acquisition of technological skills, etc. without travelling to the host University.

Having analysed previous experience of European projects and institutions, as well as academic publications, project partnership also agreed that virtual mobility can be categorised according to its academic purpose:

- Virtual mobility for studies
- Virtual mobility for placements
- Virtual mobility for shorter academic activities.

TeaCamp exploitation workshop with difference European higher education institutions resulted in a definition of *virtual mobility for studies* describing it as *offering students, as a part of their curriculum, access to courses and study schemes from another university in a foreign country in order to learn, communicate and participate in collaborative work in an international environment with teachers and fellow students abroad via the new information technologies*.

This concept should also include teachers who coordinate the virtual mobility experience. They will also increase their cultural learning from the interaction with teachers and students from different countries.

Practical examples of how virtual mobility could be implemented, are studied in different projects, e.g. VM-BASE[4] and EU-VIP[5].

Actors involved

Teachers

The role of the teachers has a double purpose. On one hand, they act as coordinators for the mobility programme and, on the other hand, they are in charge of the subject as they offer it and they have to maintain it as well.

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[4] http://vm-base.europace.org/
[5] http://www.euvip.eu/

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There are three types of teacher roles possible:

1. Virtual Mobility Coordinator.

2. Virtual Mobility Teacher.

3. Visiting Teacher.

All these roles can be undertaken by 2 or 3 different persons. The teacher in mobility is always a separate person, while the coordinating teacher and visiting teacher can be the same person or two different people.

Virtual Mobility Coordinator

The Virtual Mobility Coordinator is a teacher in the home university that is the responsible of managing and tutoring the mobility. He/she is in charge of all those activities that need an in-person work and they cannot be developed by the teacher that offers the subject in the host university.

He/she coordinates the signing of the agreement that ensures the recognition of credits (similar to Erasmus agreements of physical mobility).

He/she uses English or in the language of the country whose university offers the course/study subject.

Objectives and tasks for the Virtual Mobility Coordinator:

- Obtaining the academic accreditation as participant in a virtual mobility experience of students in their university. Presentation of the virtual mobility activities as a part of academic activities in the internal and external quality assurance. SWID analysis and/or other forms of investigation of the role and perspectives of virtual mobility in the study process.

- Taking part in inter-university projects with teachers and students.

- Collaborating with people from different linguistic and cultural areas.

Virtual Mobility Teacher

This is the teacher that, in the host university, offers his/her subject for the mobility of students from other universities. This teacher should make the subject available for virtual learning in the TeaCamp teaching platform. Also, he/she commits to carry out the tutoring, on-line classes, paying attention to the networks, etc. In brief, he/she develops all the activities required for this virtual teaching model.

He/she uses English or the language of the home university.

Objectives and tasks for the Virtual Mobility Teacher:

- Academic recognition as participant in the student virtual mobility experience in his/her university.

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- Academic activity recognition. The time the teacher uses in dealing with his/her subject of virtual mobility is duly acknowledged.

- Improving pedagogical innovation.

- Taking part in inter-university projects with students.

- Collaborating with people from different linguistic and cultural areas.

- Giving information and the necessary support to include the activities in the virtual space in all system of academic, social and research activities.

Visiting Teacher

A visitor is a teacher that wants to participate as a teacher in a subject offered by another university. This teacher must have a previous agreement with the virtual mobility lecturers from the host university and the permissions required from his/her own university in order to recognize him/her the mobility.

He/she agrees to join the team of the host university and to collaborate with them in English or in the native language of this university. He/she should develop his/her teaching activities in this language as well.

Objectives and tasks for the Visiting Teacher:

- Academic recognition for the virtual mobility from the home university.

- Academic activity recognition. The time the teacher uses in dealing with their subject of virtual mobility is duly acknowledged.

- Improving pedagogical innovation.

- Taking part in inter-university projects with teachers and students.

- Collaborating with people from different linguistic and cultural areas.

- Participating in the internal and external quality assurance and receiving the necessary recognition, based on transparency and publicity.

Students

The students interested in the exchange will be responsible of looking for the subjects that can be validated in their studies through virtual mobility. These subjects should be in the virtual offer of the host university.

Requirements:

- Necessary background for the course.

- Tecnological competences.

- Knowledge of the language of the course.

- Access to the Internet.

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- Social and cultural competences to participate in problem solving concerning the organization of studies.

Student tasks and objectives:

- Credit recognition.

- Acquisition of the cultural and linguistic competences, as well as technological one, without having to travel.

- Acquisition of self-organization competences and planning the course.

- Widen the options to enrol in courses from many different European universities without having to travel.

- Taking part in courses organized by other universities where the teaching-learning process may be different.

- Collaborating with people from different linguistic and cultural areas.

- Search and information management, documentation…

- It will act as a background for real mobility.

- Participation in the democratic decision making processes, including decisions about the recognition and subject validation, using internal and external quality assurance processes also in the host university.

Administrative tasks

All the academic process involves administrative tasks that must be carried out in addition and considered by other administrative staff:

Central Coordination

A central administrative group is needed in order to coordinate the educational offer of the universities which participate in the mobility. These are the main tasks to be coordinated:

- Preparation of the academic offer and sending to all participating universities. The TeaCamp academic offer should list the teachers, subjects, university and country which is making the offer.

- Decide the prices of the courses (if necessary).

- Promoting TeaCamp in other universities.

- Information about the enrolment process for the students.

- Including the virtual mobility in the external quality assurance and making it transparent credible.

- Promoting the recognition of courses and study periods in virtual space, based on the quality assurance, transparency and mutual trust.

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- Etc.

Local Coordination

It is necessary that each participating university has its own administration in order to manage Erasmus Virtual Mobility Agreements, the students and the teachers involved in these mobilities.

Responsibilities:

- Management/administration staff for the virtual mobility process in each European university with students enrolled in the subject:

    o Publication of the subjects offered (all the subjects that the student can access from his/her own university through the agreements signed).

    o Staff for the enrolment process

    o Specific staff for the management of the administrative process in each university.

    o Reception of the students' final marks and its incorporation to the student's academic transcript at his/her university.

    o Gathering feedback from the participants of the virtual mobility process.

    o Periodic review of the process and proposals for the improvement, including improvement of the regulations.

    o Etc.

- Management/administration staff for the virtual mobility process in the university that offers the subject:

    o Incorporation of the foreign student to the virtual mobility process in the university that offers the subject and access to data communication.

    o Assessment of the virtual mobility process for the teacher.

    o Teacher's virtual mobility certification.

    o Evaluation of the system for the mobility.

    o Participation in the quality assurance processes.

    o Etc.

University benefits and responsibilities

Universities, though their Vice-rector's offices or their internationalization offices and their Vice-rector's office for Studies and Teaching Staff will coordinate and approve the academic offer and will establish which is the minimum number of students in each subject to maintain it.

Objectives and tasks:

- Increasing the number of potential international students.

- Innovation in teaching-learning processes.

- Boosting the linguistic and cultural exchange in the university community.

- International networking with EU and worldwide institutions (contract forms for VM are suggested by EPICS[6] project for HEIs).

- Transparency and mutual trust to innovations.

- Inclusion of virtual space in democratic processes in the universities.

Responsibilities

Each university will face the costs from:

- Teachers that make the academic offer

- Local administration for mobility management.

- Quality assurance and guaranties for the participants.

Each university will recognize, via Erasmus agreements:

- The credits that the student has completed in the TeaCamp and will validate them by the suitable correspondent and referenced subjects in the Erasmus agreement.

- Academic credits and merits from teachers involved:

  o Virtual mobility coordinators

  o Teachers who propose the subjects

  o Mobility teachers (Following the previous report from the host university)

Technical support

These are people that maintain the technological tools that allow mobility. There are centralized platform technicians and professionals in the participating universities.

They maintain the virtual campus tool and the entire infrastructure to support the virtual mobility, as the video platforms, social nets, etc.

They guaranty the transparency and possibility to receive information and to participate in the democratic decision making processes.

TeaCamp Virtual mobility administration

The objective of mobility in the TeaCamp is basically the same as in the Erasmus exchanges. The only difference is that in the TeaCamp, where there is virtual mobility, it is possible to carry out a

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[6] www.epics-ve.eu

number of subjects which neither of them will involve a full course nor a semester, giving this mobility model more flexibility. The virtual mobility could be combined with the physical mobility increasing the flexibility. Different models for the combined use of face to face and e-learning with the appropriate feedback and support will be proposed.

The basic process for the academic offering in the TeaCamp has to follow these steps:

- Approval of the academic offer of the course.

- Establishment of agreements.

- Signing of the agreement.

- Permissions, access to the tools and academic management.

- Developing of the virtual mobility process.

- Final evaluation of the subjects.

- Evaluation of the cultural and social aspects.

- Continuous quality improvement, based on the internal and external evaluations.

- Academic credit recognition.

- Virtual Mobility recognition.

Approval of the academic offer of the course

Participating universities in the TeaCamp project should move the subjects offered for virtual teaching during the course to the Central Administration. This offer could be in English or in the language of the host university.

Once the offer is done, it will be approved by a Committee composed by representatives of all the universities participating in the TeaCamp. The approval should be based on the internal and external quality assurance.

After the approval, students can choose the subjects for the course. The virtual mobility coordinators will advise the students to avoid them to choose disseminated subjects that would make the acquisition of social skills more difficult.

Establishment of Agreements

Agreements between schools and universities will be established in to decide the number of students offered in the exchange. These agreements will be usually before or after the academic offer approval. The agreements must establish the number of students that can participate from each university.

Once the agreements are established, there is a proposal addressed to students so that they can apply for virtual mobility scholarship of their university. The agreements should include periodic reviews of the results and should be periodically renewed on the bases of the evaluation of quality of the results and the process.

Scenarios for virtual mobility should be also discussed within the institution and agreed with the others Erasmus institutions.

Signing of the Agreement

When the process is approved in each university, the students must sign the Erasmus agreement for the virtual mobility. This agreement should contain the student's commitment to carry out some training and to spend the required time for obtaining certain cultural and social skills from the host university.

Both, the acquisition of cultural and social competences will be evaluated at the end of the process.

Permits, accesses to tools and academic management

Technical teams will provide students and teachers with the access to the virtual campus. On the other hand, there is also access to other virtual mobility tools of the TeaCamp. These will be the ones that will provide students with the socio-cultural skills.

Administrative staff of the host university will register the students in the academic management of applications.

Development of the process of virtual mobility

Through the virtual learning platform, the student acquires the academic knowledge of the subjects in a virtual mobility model. These classes will be in English or in the language of the host university.

Cultural and social aspects will be worked out with open communication tools and exercises where the student should research about the lifestyle and habits of the host university. These socio-cultural skills are also obtained in the forums and internships where the students of the mobility are integrated with the students of the host university. Students should have the possibility to participate in the decision making process about the academic activities. Students must have access to the information about the study and research processes in the host university.

Besides using virtual mobility tools proposed and in order to achieve a cultural knowledge of the countries where they are developing the mobility, the students can use social networking under control of the tutors.

Final assessment of the subjects

At the end of the course or the subject, teachers will assess the acquired knowledge using the e-learning virtual platform.

This evaluation will be uploaded to the academic management applications of the host university and the minutes will be sent to the home university through the automatic validation of subjects.

Assessment of the cultural and social aspects

The student will have to talk with the virtual mobility coordinator of the host university in order to evaluate the acquisition of socio-cultural knowledge and skills by the student. During this interview there will be an evaluation about if the student has developed a complete virtual

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mobility or just an e-learning experience. The students should have the possibility to evaluate the study process and to submit proposals about improvements.

Academic credit recognition

Student

Once the reports of the marks have been received, the recognition of the academic credits will be taken and will be moved to the student's academic transcript.

Mobility teacher

In this case, the credits will be recognized before the development of the classes and they will be taken into account for the assignment of the academic year. The activities in the virtual mobility should be supported by the quality assurance system.

Mobility recognition

If the virtual mobility coordinator assessment of the host university is positive and the student's academic results are also positive, the home university will recognize the mobility and the student will be compensated according to the established criteria.

So a percentage of mobility can be recognized, or an equivalence can be made depending on the criteria established by the home university and the report from the virtual mobility coordinator of the host university. The evaluation of the mobility should be included in the internal and external quality assurance systems.

Preparation for Academic Activities (Using Teacamp Infrastructure)

Academic activity will be developed through a centralized virtual learning platform (Moodle) and an on-line class tool (videoconferencing).The teacher of the university that offers the subject should design the subject for this model. All the costs coming from this work and the subsequent teaching activities of the teacher will be paid by the university which offers it.

Laboratory practicals should be designed in the way that students can do them in their home university.

Furthermore, tutorials will be scheduled so that students could have a virtual space (videoconferencing preferred) where they can attend them.

Teachers from different countries will be coordinated through Elgg platform.

Possibilities for feedback and for the improvements of proposals will be supplied through Elgg platform (www.teacamp.eu/vc).

VIRQUAL[7] project aims at helping educational and training institutions to achieve Virtual Mobility and to guarantee EQF implementation through e-learning, developing infrastructure for curriculum designing on the basis of EQF tools.

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[7] http://virqual.up.pt/

Hook – up project[8] - "Hook up! CE Language Learning Gateway" was funded with support from the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission during 2008 to 2010 and continues to be implemented by universities participating in Campus Europae. One of the services it offers students is access to language learning: before, during and after the academic year abroad. Twelve languages are available, many of which are not taught at the home university.

Through Hook up! students (and teachers) have access to language tuition in all languages of the CE network at different levels of competence to enable them to study at one of the member universities of the European University Foundation and more fundamentally students have access to less widely spoken languages.

Social and Cultural Activities

Students who participate in virtual mobility will have a minimum of semi-structured activities by the tutors (mobility coordinators) they will receive some cultural feedback from the host university and the country which the university is located in. Students will be supplied with the information about the traditions of the elections of academic personal and administration, approval of the study arrangements and other different possibilities to participate in the democratic processes in the host university.

Moreover, some kind of cultural tutoring session where the student participates with other students in group internships and networks will be carried out.

The Internet search of items related to the country of destination will help the student to understand the country where he/she is developing the mobility better. This information should be supervised and addressed by the coordinator at the beginning and implemented by the student later.

Technical Support

Technical support will be centralized. Currently, Vytautas Magnus University is responsible for such maintaining.

Moodle Platform

Subjects will be created from this centre as well as the teacher and student registration.

Videoconferencing

Videoconferencing tool could be multiple. At the beginning, each university will be responsible of its own tool, so the foreign students who develop virtual mobility there must be registered.

Social Networking

Vytautas Magnus University will make available some kind of social network to all students as a complement to cultural networks. All participating students will be able to find contacts here from

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[8] http://languagelearning.campuseuropae.org/

the university where they are making the mobility and from other participating universities at the time.

Each coordinator in each university could propose some public or own tool as a sharing element of social activities among the students who are making the mobility in that university.

Facebook, Twitter, Multiply, My Space, etc. are the main tools that can be introduced into a virtual mobility course to acquire cultural and social learning from their partners

Do not forget other tools like blogs, wikis, chat, email, discussion forums, etc. that we can find in the Moodle platform and that are important in order to acquire this cultural learning.

Social bookmarking

Social bookmarking is another tool we can use for this purpose. It is a tool for Internet users to share, organize, search, and manage bookmarks (links) of web resources. And we can share it with our partners.

Del.icio.us is the main social bookmarking used to in this type of course.

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3. Lifelong learning program projects:

    3.1.   KA3 project VIRQUEL (http://virqual.up.pt/)

    3.2.   Hook-up Project (http://languagelearning.campuseuropae.org/)

    3.3.   Epics project (www.epics-ve.eu)

    3.4.   VM-Base project (http://vm-base.europace.org/)

    3.5.   EUVIP project (http://www.euvip.eu/)

    3.6.   Move-IT project (http://move-it.europace.org/)

    3.7.   TeaCamp project (www.teacamp.eu)