## Case Study template

## A) General Part

| General | |
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| Case Study Title | "Workshop on Teacher Cognition" |
| DIALOGUE thematic group | Learning & Guidance |
| Date of the case study | 11.07.11 |
| **Contact Information** | |
| Name of the institution | "Lucian Blaga" University |
| Location/country | Sibiu/Romania |
| Size of the organisation/ Number of academic/research and non-academic/administrative staff | 2500 |
| Website | http://www.ulbsibiu.ro |
| **Abstract** | |
| Key words | Adult Learning, teacher cognition, values, self assessment |
| Please provide a short abstract of the case study | The DAAD-Lecturer of the "Lucian Blaga" University offered a short workshop for teachers in collaboration with the Teacher Training Centre (Zentrum für Lehrerfortbildung - ZfL) in Sibiu. The target group was heterogeneous, it comprised German teachers of primary and secondary school of different ages and experience. The case describes a collaboration aiming to integrate research results on adult education into the planning activities. Taking into account research results on adult learning while planning a workshop for adults is regarded as a strong link between theory and practice with respect to the subject of learning and guidance. |

## B) Specific Part

The following part depends on each thematic group, outlining strengths and weaknesses of the chosen situations.

**1.** Context:

> Please present the general background ("landscape of experience") of the activity and in which institutions, organisations, units or sectors the case took place.

In May 2011 the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Office) -lecturer of the „Lucian Blaga" University in Sibiu, Romania, Miss Silvia Machein, wrote an E-mail regarding her intention of organising a little project with German teachers in Sibiu asking for a meeting in order to discuss some planning matters. The best timing for the offer of a training addressed to teachers was her main concern. The workshop was designed to take place in the rooms of the „Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu, but it could not take place as it was planned. In order to address a larger number of German teachers and to offer a diploma for the attendance, the workshop was offered as one topic during a 14 day training a larger group of teachers from all over the country was to attend in the summer holidays. This training is offered every year during summer by the Teacher Training Centre (Zentrum für Lehrerfortbildung – ZfL) in Sibiu. The Teacher Training Centre is an institution governed by the Romanian Ministry of Education, the only one in Romania offering training programmes for teachers of German. In some cases, the programmes are offered in collaboration with the University. This collaboration is restricted to the fact, that a university lecturer is invited as a trainer. In this case, the workshop offer of the University lecturer was integrated into the teacher training programme designed for the summer 2011.

The request in helping out with the planning of the workshop was a good opportunity for discussing the integration of actual research on learning and guidance and teacher beliefs during the planning activities. This topic was at first rejected, with the argument, that the workshop was designed for reflections and activities on the subject of the status and teacher beliefs of the participants and no theoretical lectures were intended. But the initial misunderstanding was overcome by a meeting on the subject and a successful dialogue between theory and practice on adult learning took place for the workshop „Teaching-profession or vocation".

**2.** What are the objectives and purposes of the concrete action?

The main purpose of the action was informing a practitioner about research on adult learning and guidance and about teacher beliefs. The workshop entitled „Teaching – profession or vocation?" was to offer a setting for reflection on the participant's teaching activities and beliefs. "Jerold Apps (1989) has argued that: 'Identifying and examining personal beliefs and

values can help teachers of adults improve their performance and change the way in which they view their roles as teachers' (p. 17)" [1]

Since *teacher cognition* or *teacher beliefs* are of the most important and influential variables in teaching and learning, the reflection was of great importance for the success of the 14 days teaching programme as a whole. Since research on teacher beliefs has not yet been recepted in Romania, this training can be regarded as a pioneering practical action of implementation of findings from research into practice.

**3.** How does this activity combine insights from research and practical hands-on experience?

1. The subject of the workshop – *teacher cognition,* can be regarded as the result of research in the field of education in the last 30 years. It has not been a matter of practice in the past, it became one in the last 15 years on international level and will probably become one in Romania in the near future.

2. For the planning of the workshop important criteria of adult learning, such as Vella's principles for effective adult learning, were taken into account. The workshop was first planned and afterwards adapted, after a discussion about research on adult learning. The practitioner had procedural skills, but was open to theoretical information. The practical experience of this particular DAAD-Lecturer corresponded to the theoretical material offered, which was regarded as a very useful tool for the final verification of the planned training activities. But the interaction and immediacy of learning during the workshop can not be attributed to the theoretical input, it was rather part of the procedural skills this particular trainer already possessed.

**4.** Does the institution/sector/unit provide instruments (e.g. ICT or human resources) for the implementation of the concrete action? Which tools were applied?

No instruments were applied.

**5. Best practice/ Bad practice:**

What kind of results were obtained? What do you consider to be the innovative or interesting part of this concrete action?

What are the barriers (potential and effective) to the full implementation of this action and what are its benefits?

In which sense can this action be useful for DIALOGUE?

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1 Bulik, Robert; Frye, Anne (2004): *A WORKSHOP FOR FACULTY: TEACHING BELIEFS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING, in: International Journal for Self-Directed Learning, volume 1, Spring 2004; p.74.*
http://www.oltraining.com/SDLwebsite/IJSDL/IJSDL1.1-2004.pdf

The most interesting part of informing a good practitioner on research about learning and guidance in LLL was overcoming the first misunderstandings regarding the information itself. The first reaction was a clear rejection of „theory", „theory" should not be included into a workshop. Discussing the practical use of this theoretical outcome led to a real interest and readiness in learning more about it.

This action of informing trainers about research outcomes in the field of Learning & Guidance in LLL would probably have a great impact on all LLL-programmes, especially for the satisfaction factor of participants. The full implementation would not be possible in the next years, because the academic style does not really permit interactive work at university level for the present.
The benefits of changing for example instruction lectures with interactive learning sequences, the benefits of learning by *doing* instead of learning by *sitting* and *listening* are self-evident and demonstrated by research already.
The dialogue between research and practice was possible in this best-practice case due to an existing relationship of trust between the involved actors. On an institutional level some obstacles are predictable. The most important obstacle is the lack of procedural experience, which leads to a theoretical approach even in the field of interactive learning or guidance versus instruction.
It is in my opinion important for DIALOGUE on the one hand to avoid assuming that this theory-practice dialogue does not exist at all, it exists as procedural skill in this case. On the other hand in the thematic field of Learning & Guidance the dialogue between theory and practice should become mandatory for all cases where this bridge doesn't exist. The most important question regards the implementation of this mandatory bridge. How is this bridge to be established? How is DIALOGUE to be disseminated, if the main objective is a mandatory bridge between theory and practice on LLL Learning & Guidance?

**6.** Are researchers and practitioners directly linked in this activity?

- If yes, how are they linked and what are the communication and interaction processes?

- If they do not communicate directly, how are findings from research connected to practical activities and vice versa?

In this activity of planning the workshop the relationship between practitioner and researchers on adult learning was mediated by me. Due to the fact that our university doesn't research on adult learning or LLL, the information about research findings on adult learning was taken from the internet. I gave the information in a synthetic form to the practitioner, to Miss Silvia Machein, during our discussion meeting and during our e-mail exchanges.

**7.** Which elements would you identify as easily transferable to other institutions in different regional and national contexts?

The actual theoretical research outcomes can easily be transferred to other institutions on a national level, because it is easily accessible on the internet. The practical, procedural implication is difficult if not impossible to transfer, regarding the teaching tradition and lack of procedural experience.

**8.** Recommendations for dissemination:

Briefly identify the most important points in the case study for other ULLL managers and practitioners – these may include risks as well as benefits.

Please formulate some recommendations for the dissemination on the basis of the case study addressed to the working group and other partners.

ULLL managers and practitioners should take variables and characteristics of adult learning into account. This can only be beneficial for all parties involved in LLL activities.
The dissemination of DIALOGUE should aim at higher level, if real changes of traditional practice is intended by this project.

**9.** Additional information. E.g. bibliography, website, publications, reports

http://www.fsu.edu/~adult-ed/jenny/learning.html#kindssettings
http://www.oltraining.com/SDLwebsite/IJSDL/IJSDL1.1-2004.pdf
http://www.oltraining.com/SDLwebsite/IJSDL/IJSDL6.1-2009.pdf
http://www.oltraining.com/SDLwebsite/journals.php

We are intending to put your case study on the website.

Please tick here ☐ if you do **not** wish to see your case study published on the project's website

**ANNEX I**

Example: New Media TWG. (How to connect virtual and physical space?)

Learning environment

Research on development of new media

Practice of using new media in LLL

Good practice Description

Research(ers)

Practitioners

How it is possible to realise a DIALOGUE?