

The SIPP Intervention Manual Evaluation

Introduction

This report aims to produce an independent evaluation of The SIPP Intervention Manual. The partners had a task to produce an Intervention Manual which staff using Grade Predictor could use to supplement their approaches to supporting learners. Staff in institutions had made initial interventions through using Grade Predictor tools with students but this often could pose some hard challenges for students and staff alike and an accompanying resource was deemed useful.

The aim of using Grade Predictor tools across Europe is to make sure students make well informed choice, that they complete their chosen course of study and do not drop out and that they achieve to their full potential. The aim of the Intervention Manual which would accompany tools is to equip staff to support students well in order to achieve this.

The evaluation of the Manual has been undertaken in 3 ways. The external evaluator firstly assessed if the partners completed what they had set out to do in the Intellectual Objective describing the Manual. Secondly the product was assessed against a Best Practice Resource that was produced as part of an Erasmus+ KA2 partnership programme which was graded outstanding and involved a partnership from a similar range of backgrounds. This project was a UK led project called The Eureka Project. Finally views on the Manual were obtained from teachers in a Higher Education Institution in the Midlands of England who work with students on foundation degree courses, students who have not achieved as well as they might for a range of reasons such as embarking on the wrong courses or underachieving. The aim of this independent voice was to glean whether they felt the Manual would be of assistance in addressing students' needs from the perspective of those with experience of such students.

Did the Guide meet Project Objectives?

The task was led by Zlínský kraj who had significant experience of developing guides and directories in other Erasmus+ Strategic partnerships and who brought great diligence to this task.

- **Each partner led by Zlínský kraj were to produce a resource directory for their own country**

A template was produced by Zlínský kraj and each partner followed the same methodology. It was agreed by the partnership that each partner would complete the template with at least one intervention and this would be compiled into one resource for all partners to use. The sum of the parts is greater than individual parts was the

mantra here and every partner would find other countries practice worthwhile. Therefore, the final document reflects this approach.

- **Promotion of the Manual**

The Manual should be posted on the SIPP website and each partner should have a link to this. Most partners had addressed this but no current links could be found for GRETB or Sataedu. This is an action point to be addressed.

Each partner country should contribute as a minimum:

- **A list of institutions on national/regional and local level which provide training, consultancy and guidance**

All partners did this. A number of the partners produced a list for each particular type of intervention and this was very useful.

- **A list of strategic documents, studies, reports and scientific articles**

Four of the five partners did this. The exception was Sataedu. Whilst not all partners were able to provide web links for their resources and some were able to provide more resources than others those who responded provided pertinent information which would be useful to those using the Manual.

- **A set of curriculum approaches which can be delivered across Europe by teachers.**

Each partner produced at least one approach.

GRETB produced three examples of interventions:

1. Provision of Alternative Pathways for at risk students. This is a very clear description of alternative provision for students identified as not suitable for final examinations known in Ireland as The Leaving Certificate. The approach and diagrams are clear and useful to the reader.
2. Support for students who have been identified as having a disability. A range of bullet points describe provisions in place to address need.
3. Support for students through the pastoral care system. A multi disciplinary approach to supporting students. A useful range of support is outlined including a cause for concern approach.

Indications are provided on the duration of programmes.

Sataedu produced one example of an intervention:

1. Various meetings with Parents and Teachers. Within this there are actually two approaches firstly one for students whose attendance is poor. They are supported by
2. the development of learning contracts. Secondly support for students with learning needs through a special support plan. It would be useful if these approaches were

separated in the document as different interventions and perhaps more narrative then added on each one.

Xabec produced examples of two interventions:

1. ProjectX methodology. This is an intervention which is customised to students to help support them to meet the requirements of employers through the curriculum. It is simply described and has got accompanying resources.
2. Personal Development Plans. This is an intervention to enable students to complete their vocational training. A simple accompanying description accompanies this intervention. Perhaps a copy of a Personal Development Plan tool would be useful to accompany this.

Learning Plus UK produced examples of two interventions:

1. Minimum and Challenge Targets. This is an intervention to enable students to make appropriate progress in subjects. It allows interventions to be made if it becomes apparent that students are not on track to achieve appropriate grades based on their prior attainment. It is a very well described intervention with appropriate accompanying resources.
2. Choosing Appropriate Courses. This is an intervention to support students making their post 16 course choices in the UK so that they can successfully complete the course and move onto an appropriate destination. It is particularly suited to Careers Guidance interventions. It is well described with appropriate accompanying resources.

Zlínský kraj produced an example of one intervention:

1. Encouragement of well informed course choices. This is an intervention to support students when choosing their school or course and to help them to complete the course and move on to a suitable destination. This intervention constitutes a series of well described activities with a timeframe and has appropriate accompanying resources.

- **A list of web resources.**

Web links and resources are in evidence throughout the document as are contact details for partners which are useful for Manual users.

- **All shared practice and resources will be documented on partner websites.**

A number of partners could do a little more to increase the profile of the Intervention Manual on their own websites. Undoubtedly all Interventions being in one guide gives kudos to the document and currency in more than one country. The Manual is transferable across borders.

A comparison to The Eureka Project Best Practice Resource Directory

The Eureka Project aimed to contribute to addressing the EU 2020 targets of reducing the rates of early school leaving below 10% by supporting students at the highest end of the spectrum. In particular it aimed to address two of the 2009 ET 2020 EU objectives to address challenges in education and training systems by 2020: 1. Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training; and 2. Promoting equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship. The project aimed to up skill teachers and other professionals in the early identification of the most able students. Importantly the project also aimed to provide resources to enable successful and powerful impacts by staff with more able students once identified. One of these resources was a Best Practice Resource Directory.

The external evaluation of this resource made the following judgement-

“This is a significant Resource Directory – easy to use and with a wide range of useful resources suitable for practitioners in education settings”.

The evaluator also made the following statement-

“All partners made strong yet very interesting and significant contributions. The Directory embraces a number of styles and yet is very cohesive”.

This can largely be said about the SIPP Intervention Manual. The Manual embraces a number of styles yet remains cohesive. It is produced in English and yet remains accessible and understandable to those whose first language is not English. Some partners have made more significant contributions than others although this can often be a reflection of the practice in the various partner countries.

The Evaluator addressed the themes of Transnationality, Exchange of Practice, Dissemination and Valorisation in The Eureka Best Practice Directory.

Transnationality - the success of transnational working and the effectiveness of partners' contributions. The Eureka Directory methodology used was based on a tried and trusted approach which they were involved in during participation in another Erasmus+ project The SEE Project: <http://www.steminaction.eu/>. They obviously had experience of how to collect data from partners and how to piece it together. Resources are well documented and include a huge wealth of materials including well researched videos, publications, lesson plans and others. The nature of the publication makes it portable to all countries beyond the partnership.

The SIPP Intervention Manual methodology was also based on a tried and trusted approach which the Intellectual Objective lead had experience of through a number of other Erasmus+ projects: The SEE Project, The TIPP Project and The Eureka Project. They had significant experience of the collection of data, the ability to make this accessible for all and

the production of such guides. The SIPP Intervention Manual is a more focussed document than the Eureka Directory concentrating on resources and aids to particular interventions rather than a comprehensive guide to resources. This is deliberately so. The nature of the Manual makes it portable to all countries beyond the partnership.

Exchange of practice - are the products genuinely good practice? The Eureka product was produced by a range of experts. Much of the content represented the best practice in individual institutions and much of the research identified market leading materials in partner countries. There is no doubt that the content was well researched, had been trialled, provided robust materials, was based on best practice and was genuinely good practice. It provided a marvellous easy to use resource for those working in this field.

The SIPP Intervention Manual was produced by a range of experts in education. The content represents best practice in terms of interventions in partner organisations and often national practice. The content within the Manual had been researched and was based on best practice and was seen as genuinely good practice. It provides a very easy to use resource for those working in the field and a catalyst and signpost for those wanting to find out more. Within the project there are other resources such as video's which will add to its usefulness and value.

Dissemination - whether partners have reached a wide audience. The Eureka Best Practice Directory was disseminated through all the channels that the project had used to promote itself and its outputs. The project established a dedicated website as it felt this was the most effective way to promote the project and its outputs. They put a tremendous amount of energy into this. The Directory was also promoted through Facebook and Twitter accounts and the one discovery network. Most importantly, it had been cascaded through school networks.

The SIPP partners have largely still to address the issue of dissemination in relation to the Manual. There is a project website in place which is easy to use and the Manual is within this. A number of partners have good links to this. All partners have regional and national networks and dissemination of the Manual should be fairly straightforward. Many are involved in a range of European projects and they should also consider dissemination to their partners.

Valorisation - whether partnerships have achieved multiplier effects through mainstreaming activity. The Eureka Project was able to show valorisation in a number of ways particularly cross fertilisation across the partnership with the Greek school taking on approaches from UK schools and teacher training in the UK being influenced by the work of the project.

Specifically in relation to the SIPP Intervention Manual it is too early to report on valorisation. In the Czech Republic for example however there has been significant interest in the work of the project and its results. The intervention Manual can be an aid to this.

A Teachers' Perspective

Teachers in the Foundation Learning Department at Keele University were asked for their views on the Manual. 6 staff took part in the activity led by the The Foundation Year Head of Business Humanities and Social Sciences. This was carried out through the use of Microsoft team's technology.

1. Is the document clear and easy to use?

All responded yes. Some would have welcomed some more resources and web links.

2. Are the Interventions useful in terms of aiding support to students?

A number of the interventions were described as very purposeful and would appear good practice. Teachers particularly liked those they were most familiar with in the UK but ProjectX in Spain and the methodologies used in the Czech Republic and Ireland particularly around an alternative curriculum and those with special needs received mentions.

3. Do you think these Interventions would support students identified through Grade Predictor?

All interventions were seen as having merit and because they had been implemented of value. It was felt that such approaches could help students to avoid pitfalls and enter on occasions university courses directly.

4. How would you improve the Manual?

Teachers mentioned that examples of personal developments plans for example in Spain or Finland would be useful.

5. Would you recommend the Manual?

All stated the Manual had merit.

6. What would you change?

The Manual was largely described as easy to use and in a very friendly format. Purposeful was another description.

Suggestions made were:

- A list at the end of useful contacts.
- A list of partner websites.
- A website address for the SIPP Project.

Conclusion

The Intervention Manual is a useful tool in the context of student's fulfilling their goals and improving their life chances. Importantly it achieves what it sets out to as described in the Intellectual Objective and can make a difference for students. The approach partners have used to develop the Manual has made it portable across national boundaries. It is concise and straightforward to use. It compares well against other well appraised resources and itself has been based on best practice from other KA2 strategic partnerships. A focus group of teachers found it very pertinent and helpful

Recommendations

- Partners should address the dissemination points and make sure that links are established to their own websites.
- The contribution from the Finnish partner could be developed a little further and Strategic documents and Reports should be added for this partner.
- The ideas reported by the group of teachers from a Higher Education Institution in the UK should be considered.

B Martin 22/04/2020

Addendum 27/05/2020

Following the evaluation report of the 22/04/2020 the Partnership addressed the recommendations and made the following changes to the manual:

- Strategic documents, studies, reports and scientific articles were added for Sataedu.
- A template for a Personal Development Plan was added for Xabec.
- A front cover has been included with the School Improvement Partnership Project website address.

All these additions have added value to the document.

B Martin 27/05/2020