

MEETS PROJECT

EARLY identification, INDIVIDUALIZED targeting and TAILORED
intervention for young people at risk of NEET

*Flexible pathways and an effective methodology for
the transition into the labour market*

IO2-A4

Guidelines for Work and VET Placements Mentoring and coaching sessions 2 - provide work experience opportunities

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1. Introduction

Overcoming barriers in the transition from school to work is one of the main issues of European politics.

It is a paradoxical situation: while youth unemployment in Europe is still high, many companies claim that it is hard for them to find appropriate new staff.

Only 35% of employers say that vocational training institutions prepare youth well for work (McKinsey Center for Government 2014).

Many employers, particularly in those countries affected the most by youth unemployment feel that skill gaps are among one of the most important reasons (31% in Portugal, 33% in Spain and 47% in Italy) (McKinsey Center for Government 2014, p. 20).

This perception of a lack of skills can lead to a general reluctance of companies to hire.

On the side of youngsters in search of a perspective, the apparent or presumed lack of jobs and training opportunities can lead to discouragement and increases the risk of dropping out of the education and training system.

Countries with the lowest rate of youth unemployment, like Switzerland, Germany and Austria have strongly work-based training systems, which make a strong effort to expose youngsters to real-life work situations and to acquaint them with a good knowledge of job seeking and career planning skills, as well as a good sense for the expectations of employers. While these systems cannot be copied 1:1 in different circumstances, the general principle of **facilitating transitions from school to work through early exposure to employers and real work situations can be applied universally.**

Internships are a good instrument to expose youngsters to the world of work.

Companies benefit from internships, as they can find matching talent early on and take part in its further formation. This **lowers the risk of hiring the wrong candidate** among those who are academically educated with little practical experience.

As explained in IO2-A1 building the social capital of youngsters and giving them the opportunity to demonstrate talent in a context different from the classroom, can give them a positive perspective, raise motivation and skills and can therefore lower their risk of becoming NEET.

The classic process for choosing a suitable vocation for young candidates is done by combining exam results or comparable standardised test results with a generalised prediction of future performance and general behavioural and self-representational attributes. In doing so, the responsible trainers or human resources employees in the company can assume they have made the right choice of candidate having used the normal company process for acquisition as well as using their experience and "gut feeling".

In this way young pupils who are at risk to become NEET because of weak performance at school or low education level only rarely get a chance for vocational in-company training or initial employment.

However, there are good reasons to doubt the functionality for both sides, for the company as well as for the young people:

In spite of high youth unemployment in fact many particularly smaller and less known SME find that the number of appropriate candidates for employment is decreasing.

Two factors are common to many European countries:

A **trend towards an academic education** dries out the supply of practically-orientated youth, since only academic achievements yield social prestige, even if they prove to be dead end roads.

In the long run, **demographic change**, in part due to a low fertility rate, decreases the absolute number of youth dramatically, putting smaller companies in the position to compete with better known brand name companies for young talent.

Not in all cases must the best match be the one with the best academic credentials or career prospects, since these often move on to larger competitors.

More often, finding a candidate that wants to become committed to the specific company and also has exactly the right potential and character traits for the job is the best strategy.

These circumstances require a paradigm change regarding the design of the matching process for the transfer between school and the training system and/or to entry level jobs in SME.

Matching strategies must be based on the insights gained through the realisations and the instruments of the action-orientated vocational internship.

In the German pilot project bevoplus¹ a concept with the following basic points was established:

The concept of Training oriented Internships (ToI)

Basis points

- **Competencies relevant for the working process in the company as selection criteria**
- **Chance for the candidates to prove themselves in a environment completely different from classroom**
- **Process – reflecting competences: young people and company training staff**
- **Assessment of the internship**
- **Development plan**

The internship should look not at the prior academic achievements, which can be misleading. Instead the focus should be on key competencies and competences like the candidate's ability to make decisions and act on them in complex learning and working situations, and the capability for each individual to organise themselves and their actions independently. Also practical skills and a good working attitude in real working situations can be identified during well prepared internships.

This puts the learning competencies and practical and relevant capability for action of the individual candidates in a more important position: The trainees will be seen as young people with the ability to learn and develop, and taken on and treated as such in the workplace.

¹ www.bevoplus.de

Competencies and competences relevant for the actual working process become the selection criteria.

Therefore also candidates that are not thriving in a classroom environment, and are therefore in danger of dropping out from the educational system as a whole, get the chance to prove themselves in a completely different environment.

This has proved not only to boost motivation for the youth, but also to be an innovative way of finding junior staff for training or employment, particularly for smaller SME.

The guidelines on shaping such action-orientated internships to follow are shaped along these experiences, as well as along the findings of the initial research and analyses in the NEETS project.

The guideline „Training orientated Internship“ supports employers, schools and VET providers in designing and guiding meaningful internships. The interactive approach supports employers as well as youngsters in making better decisions based on experience.

In the context of the wider NEETS model, the guideline contributes to the **preparation** of youngsters for their further career pathway as it extends their knowledge of realistic career pathways and therefore contributes to their motivation to finish school.

Internships are a part of their **guidance** along realistic educational and career pathways, as they

- **explore deeper the world of work** that the students are about to enter,
- **expand their social capital (knowing companies and other agents),**
- **build their competence** to self-reflect and test their own abilities **in an alternative environment.**

Suitably-shaped internships along this guideline also contribute to the **consolidation** of the integration to the education and training system as continuing contacts between the student and the hosting company are foreseen and/or the transfer to other relevant contacts.

This will give the students more options and resources.

The **contacts made with peers**, who are some years ahead of them and have managed to make a career in a company, provide **continuing encouragement not to drop out of education** training or employment. These **peers are also additional contacts (alternative or complementary to school teachers, family and friends) to talk to in the event of a crisis.**

This is particularly impactful, as **these contacts are rooted in work, and therefore have another frame of reference in contrast to other peer groups which may be dysfunctional and counter-productive.**

For the reasons described above, internships of a certain minimal duration and intensity are the by far preferable form of exposure to work experience.

All actors should invest in creating and shaping a local network which allows for the regular implementation of such internships. Countries as Austria, Switzerland, Germany and others have made internships in companies compulsory for grade 8-10 students, as they have proven to be a highly efficient means of facilitating the transition to work or further education as well as professional orientation in general.

Also only internships of a certain level of intensity will yield a high return of investment for companies, as only such internships allow companies to get to know young candidates and discover their specific talents.

Well shaped internships improve the matching between youngsters and companies, thereby avoiding the high costs of wrong staff choices.

Nevertheless in some cases the necessary network among companies and between companies and schools as well as VET providers is only now built. Also in some cases legal and/or other institutional restrictions limit the opportunities of organising genuine in company internships.

In these cases and/or in the phase of preparing internships, also visits to companies, presentations by company representatives in schools and VET providers and job shadowing can offer a limited, yet valuable exposure to the world of work.

Therefore some guidance for organising such experiences is also part of this guideline.

For many youth voluntary work in NGO, social initiatives and other organisations can provide valuable experiences, which can be encouraging and highly relevant for the development of their competencies.

Therefore a final chapter includes some remarks about organising such experiences.

Aims of the Guideline

The guideline contributes to implementing the main aims of the general NEETS model:

„Ensuring that young people have the social capital (contacts, networks, know-how) to find a job – this includes that project participants:

- have met other young people working/studying in different EET fields
- have met with at least one potential employer in an area of their interest
- have been provided with training on how to conduct job searches
- have had at least one work experience placement or internship
- are more aware of the skills or experience needed for different jobs
- are more aware of the difference between the school and work environment
- are more aware of what organisations or individuals are available locally to help them find a job or further training opportunity
- are more aware of how to behave in the work place” (See T. Spielhofer and K. Junge (2015): IO2–A1 Guidelines for the application of the pilot project in partners’ countries)

Background

Internships which are prepared systematically and which are orientated around real practices in companies and businesses, and which address the individual strengths and talents of each individual are tested and successful practice and therefore with a good prospect of success.

This guideline aids the co-creation of such internships with suggestions for checklists, methodological hints and a structure for planning, implementing and reflecting the internship. The guideline describes an adaptable general model of an internship.

Mere work experience or passive visits to companies without a real immersion in the work process and targeted opportunities to test one's own talents cannot be regarded as an internship according to the definition of this guide.

But if internships cannot be offered to the students due to an unalterable reluctance of companies to provide internships, there should be used alternative methods in order to acquaint young people with the world of work – even if these methods by far cannot replace the real experiences drawn from an internship. These alternative methods are presented in chapter 4 of this guideline.

Benefit

Benefits from Training oriented Internships

Students/young people:

- **higher level of social capital (knowledge of potential employers, relevant peers etc.)**
- **knowledge about companies' requirements, occupational profiles and career pathways**
- **they have tested their talents in a real work environment**
- **support of transition to work**

Employers/companies:

- **screen appropriate candidates for future employment according to their requirements, identify talent and potential**
- **estimate necessary efforts for training and familiarisation**
- **avoid costly disappointments in recruiting process**

Schools/VET providers:

- **broader variety of learning opportunities**
- **strengthening resources of their clients**
- **successful transition to employment or further education**
- **lower drop out rate**

Employers and training companies benefit from such an approach to contact and screen appropriate candidates for future employment according to their- sometimes very specific - requirements. The process helps to avoid excessive, but also insufficient demands on the candidate. Costly disappointments can be avoided to a high degree. The process helps to identify talent and potential, but also to realistically estimate the necessary effort for training and/or familiarisation.

Schools and VET providers offer a broader variety of learning opportunities. The resources of their clients are strengthened and a successful transition to employment or further education is more probable. A lower dropout rate is a consequence of the additional resources and motivation and the school VET-provider gains a better reputation in the community.

Students benefit from a higher level of social capital (knowledge of potential employers, relevant peers etc.) as well as relevant knowledge about companies requirements, occupational profiles and career pathways. They have tested their talents in an alternative environment and are either well grounded to real-life conditions and/or encouraged by the success in a real-life environment.

2. Training orientated Internships: Planning – Implementing – Guiding

In order to find young people for the company who are motivated, ready to learn and suitable for the practical requirements of each job, companies must create working and learning situations, where practical talent and keenness and ability to learn can be demonstrated.

In order to be able to shape such situations at an adequate level of difficulty, SMEs themselves need new competencies for a potential-orientated candidate selection process, in the first place.

The guideline Training orientated Internship contributes to identifying and developing the vocational learning potential of young people. As a consequence, more young people will be promising candidates for training or initial employment in a company. Also work experience and exposure to the real expectations and skill profiles in demand will better inform and motivate the education preferences of young people.

Main focus is to identify and develop the relevant competencies and competences for vocational training and employment (in contrast to the academic performance).

Vocational training providers, schools and companies/businesses must cooperate in order to co-create such internships.

The guide will discuss main points² of content, methodologies and behavioural factors, which are relevant for an assessment of the employability or trainability of the intern in a specific company.

The internship should be perceived as a learning process for all three parties (company/business-youngster-school/VET provider). The process is guided by mutual systematic feedback about progress and difficulties.

Since companies/businesses usually are not used to such a systematic approach, support from the side of school/VET provider educational experts is necessary.

These internship coordinators should encourage and support the interns to reflect and evaluate their learning experiences in the work environment using relevant and transparent criteria.

A Training orientated Internship (ToI) can only be a success if it is planned, implemented and guided systematically.

Each activity should be based on a conscious concept and aim and follow a common logic. This guide gives hints for shaping such a structure. Also some suggestions for tools and templates are provided.

Training orientated Internships should be structured in three steps:

² A detailed 100 p. guideline is available from the partnership of the German Ministry of Education and Research Pilot Project bevoplus www.bevoplus.de (in German)

- „Planning Tol“analyses and defines a realistic profile of requirements, which will be very specific for each company/business. This profile will guide the content and process of the internship.
- „Implementing Tol“selection of candidates, implementation and reflection of the internship.
- „Guiding Tol“continuous improvement of the internship design and implementation.

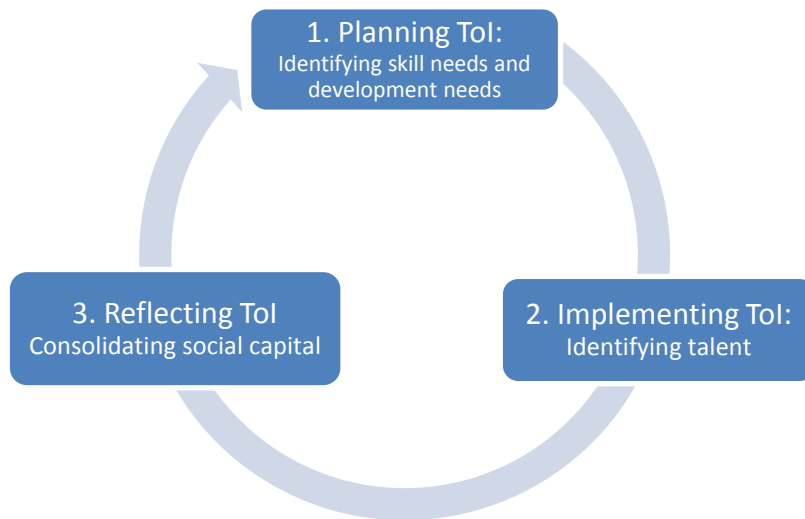


Fig.1: Three Steps of Tol design

2.1 First Step: Planning Training oriented Internship (Tol)

The general aim of planning a Tol is to find the employment and/or training potential of youngsters. Schools are a very different environment for performing and learning from companies and businesses. Therefore academic performance is a very limited predictor of the ability to add value to a business.

Preparation in School/VET Provider

Weak ties between schools/VET providers and companies are one of the main causes of youth unemployment in Europe (Mc Kinsey 2014). While in some countries the education system and the world of work are „worlds apart“, also in countries who have the reputation of a comparatively smooth transition from school to work because of largely company-based VET training (like the dual system in Switzerland, Germany, Austria), making sure that companies and schools cooperate well is a constant topic of reform.

1 Planning Training oriented Internships

Preparation of Schools/VET Providers

Tasks of Schools/VET providers :

- **Face to face contact with decision makers in companies; existing contacts should be expanded (contacts from courses for company staff and/or social contacts with former graduates)**
- **Set targets for the quality and quantity of such contacts**
- **Nominate an internship coordinator (defined responsibility to reach out to companies)**

In order to make sure that students can make a smooth transition to work or further education schools should

- Make sure that they understand the requirements in typical businesses and companies from firsthand experience and have sufficient and systematic face to face contact with decision makers in companies, particularly within their own community.
- Existing contacts should be expanded.
- Schools should set targets for the quality and quantity of such contacts.
- VET providers often have contacts through the provision of specific courses for company staff and or social contacts with former graduates of their institutions.
- Maintaining such contacts can be a good way to maintain and expand the network.
- Discussing local/sectorial qualification and skills needs in events can be a good way to start a discussion about further cooperation
- Smaller companies and businesses should not be forgotten. They often do not have the resources to attend events, therefore they have to be visited in person.

Organising internships for students and/or cooperation in wider training programs in the case of VET can be a good way to implement the cooperation.

Schools/VET providers should nominate an internship coordinator to make sure that there is a defined responsibility to reach out to companies.

In general, schools often will be involved in the local community in one way or the other, depending on the context.

Such involvement can be used to find internship placements and to commit the community to the task of facilitating the transition from school to work as a collective effort. Appreciation by the community can be a motivating factor for the companies, particularly smaller ones.

Schools should make sure that students know as much about the local business and company community as possible, in order to make sure that students will not give up on looking for a career because they imply that „there are no jobs anyway“. This implies working closely with potential employers in order to identify their real needs and potential unidentified vacancies.

One of the main aims of this guideline is to help schools and companies to work out which skills and competencies are really crucial and which ones rather mirror an unrealistic „ideal“. Such ideals often reflect a lack of analysis of the factual requirements.

Preparation of Students for the Internship

In order to prepare students for internships schools should

- Reflect the aims of the internship and discuss the mission with all relevant actors in the school
- Discuss vocational topics and career planning skills with students
- Invite various company representatives to the school to talk about their business, in order to give students a first idea of potential fields of interest
- Organise visits to companies
- Research the business scene from newspapers, internet, leaflets etc.
- Invite former students in employment to talk about their career and eventually ask them to mentor the „new generation“
- Motivate students to think of potential career pathways for themselves
- Help students to think about their own talents, strengths and interest
- Practice to express such interest and motivation in a written application for an internship
- Work with students on resilience and persistence, as often it will take several applications for an internship until the actual placement

Preparation in Company

The planning of the internship therefore should take the resources and competencies of the company/business as a starting point. These must be related to the knowledge, skills and competencies of the youngster, which the youngster should demonstrate and eventually expand during the internship.

There are two steps:

Step a) Defining requirements

The company/business works with the educational expert to think about what are the real practical requirements for an entry level job or for the first steps of a training program. Which abilities are critical?

Eventually the experiences with prior internships and/or training programs can be reflected at this point.

Which competencies can and should be observed?

Guiding questions and a checklist support this discussion (XX)

Step b) Assessing trainability/employability:

Basic criteria for the assessment of the competencies that were described in sub-step a) are defined. These should always be realistic and relevant for the specific entry level workplaces and/or requirements at the beginning of a training program.

Roles in the Process

Schools: School internships coordinator. Schools should regard it as their responsibility to facilitate the smooth transition from school to further education or training or work. In order to facilitate the transition to work they must be aware of the requirements of the businesses and companies, particularly those in their own community. They should work to build a network with these companies. Such networks can be of mutual benefit, since the profiles of the students will be more adapted and more transparent for the companies as a consequence. In order to achieve such improved cooperation the schools should nominate staffs who are responsible to make and maintain contacts with the local businesses and companies. They should work with businesses and companies to provide meaningful internship opportunities. Often particularly smaller companies and businesses lack the means to shape a systematic internship plan. Here the internship coordinator can help the company to reflect its needs and resources before the internship, make the internship plan, be available for questions and intervention during the internship and help with the evaluation of the internship afterwards.

VET-provider: VET-provider internship coordinator: The same general aims as described for school apply.

In addition the internship coordinator should be aware of the learning resources within the VET provider as well as the learning opportunities/working situations within businesses/companies. The internship coordinator shapes an internship plan that makes sure that the learning results achieved in the VET environment are used and tested in the real world company environment, but also that the intern can experience new situations which would not be possible in a classroom/workshop environment. He/she consults the company on how to make the work environment more learner friendly, e.g. by analysing and breaking down complex work tasks in such a way to make it possible for an inexperienced person to make a start.

1 Planning Training oriented Internships – Roles in the process

School/VET-provider internship coordinator:

- **Know the requirements of the businesses and companies**
- **Know the learning resources within the VET provider and learning opportunities/working situations within companies**
- **Make sure that students understand the requirements in companies (first hand experience sufficient and systematic)**
- **Help the company to reflect its needs and resources before the internship**
Help the company to elaborate the internship plan
- **Make sure that learning results achieved in the VET environment are used and tested in the company environment**
- **Be available for questions and intervention during the internship**
- **Help with the evaluation of the internship afterwards**

Company/Business: Internship responsible. The internship responsible in smaller establishments will often be the owner. He/she makes the final decisions. In larger companies there might be dedicated staff in charge. He/she should work with the internship coordinators to make the internship plan. He takes care that the internship allows the company to identify the talents of the candidate and to give meaningful feedback. He makes decisions based on some degree of face to face contact with the intern as well as documentation produced. He instructs and guides the internship mentor/buddy. The internship responsible uses his own social capital to open up additional opportunities for the intern, where appropriate. He gives his recommendations for the further educational VET-training pathway of the intern. In particular he uses his knowledge of the business community to open up such pathways.

Company/business: Internship mentor/buddy: The internship mentor/buddy is the direct contact person for the intern. He introduces them to the company, hands out work assignments, is available for questions, observes and documents the work results. Ideally the company should choose a person the intern can relate to with regards to age, background, education etc. The aim is to demonstrate that working in this or a comparable company is a realistic and accessible goal for the student in risk of becoming NEET. The mentor should make every effort to give quality feedback and to encourage the intern to continue with education and strive to transit to training and/or further education. He should be realistic in the description of opportunities and requirements. Ideally he would keep in touch with the intern also after the internship face to face or via social media. He uses his own social capital to open up additional opportunities for the intern, where appropriate.

Company/business: Workplace Responsible: an employee doing the actual work in a specific workplace, being available to work alongside the intern, supervising, instructing, observing, and assessing the intern. While the employee should be emphatic and helpful also the potential for working without in detail supervision should be tested.

1 Planning Training oriented Internships – Roles in the process

Company/Business (2):

Internship mentor/buddy:

- **Direct contact person for the intern**
- **Introduces the intern to the company**
- **Hands out work assignments**
- **Is available for questions**
- **Observes and documents the work results**

Workplace responsible (employee at a specific workplace):

- **Working alongside the intern: supervising, instructing, observing, assessing the intern**

2.2 Second Step: Implementing Training oriented Internship

The general aim of this step is to identify the (vocational) learning potential of youngsters in an interactive and systematic way.

All parties (company, school, student) will communicate about their experiences and the progress made along documented results of working and learning experiences.

The school/VET internship coordinators should be available to assist the company in all matters related to the internship, which in many cases will include support in using the tools described in chap.3. The school internship coordinator should keep in touch with student and company internship mentor at least twice during the internship. At the beginning of the cooperation the communication will be more frequent, while later on a short review (often not more than 5 min are required) at two points suffice.

There are two sub-steps:

- a) **Accompanying the Internship:** the potential of the youngsters can be assessed only if there is a continuing guidance and mentoring in the work situation. Depending on the local situation companies, schools and VET providers must delegate staff to make sure that there are clear assignments along the internship plan, that the assignments are significant for the competencies and fields of potential that should be tested. They should make sure that the intern, as well as the company staff, can give feedback at the beginning (at least daily, ideally on a continuing basis). The accessibility of the guide person should be high, however the guide should make sure that the youngster has the chance and challenge to also demonstrate the ability to solve problems and perform without much external supervision. Therefore the guide should in no case „instruct“the intern. The explanation and introduction of work assignments should be done by company staff. It proved to be good practice to provide a „buddy“within the company to which the intern can relate in terms of age, background and educational history.
- b) **Assessing the internship:** The internship responsible and the internship mentor (or wider guidance team) should also assess the internship. It should make sure that the assessment is evidence based (results of tasks implemented, observations, communication, impression). The guide at hand supports this assessment with tools and templates for structuring the assessment dialogue, the certification of the internship and development of a development plan for those of the youngsters which are regarded by the business/company as potential future trainees or employees.

The in-company team should discuss the results with the school internship coordinator as well as with the student.

2.3 Third Step: Reflecting Training oriented Internship – consolidating Social Capital

Aim of this step is to document the results of the internship and to develop perspectives and/or pathways for the youngster. In the best case, this can include the offer of future training or employment in the business/company for those youngsters who proved to be a good match for the company's needs.

Also a self-evaluation from the perspective of the company is important at this point. Together with the partners from the schools and/or VET provider it should be reflected if the internship met the company's aims, if there are points for improvement and how these can be implemented. The guide provides criteria for the evaluation of the benefits.

There are three sub-steps:

- a) **Attracting and committing future employees among the interns:** If there are youngsters whom the company regards as good matches for its needs, it is very important to keep up the contact until after the end of school. Also companies can refer the youngster to other

businesses/companies in the community if it thinks it has identified talent that it cannot hire himself. In this case the company uses its social capital to assist the youngster to find a job or training placement, but also to contribute to the supply of tested and tried talent for the local business community. Keeping contact is of utmost importance, since the ties that were created during the internship must be reinforced on a continuing basis in order to encourage the youngster that there is a realistic perspective of employment and further training available to him/her. This is a strong motivator to perform in school and to develop well. For the company it is a way to make sure that the talented youngster will choose the internship company rather than other options.

- b) Improving the ToI: all actors evaluate experiences and initiate the necessary improvements
- c) Additional activities: Providing training and internship placements can vastly improve the visibility and image of the company/business in the community. The business is perceived as a responsible and competent employer. This will attract more and more competent candidates also for other jobs and improve relationships in the community in general. Close contacts with the civil society, schools and VET providers will increase the ability to acquire matching staff if needed quickly.

In general all actors should find ways to reflect on the process and benefit of the internship and discuss improvements. Often quite minor irritations can stop the whole process. Therefore all actors should make sure that there is constant communication and feedback and an openness to adapt to each other's needs. This communication will require some effort initially while in the long run it will build a level of trust that is very conducive to the effectiveness of the cooperation.

2.4 How to use the Guideline

The general model presented in this guide should be understood as the description of the general approach to be taken. It is not a 1:1 instruction which prescribes every detail. It is precisely the point of the method to support a process which is adapted to the specific case, the resources and priorities of the actors involved.

However, the general idea to act in a systematic way to initiate individualised matching processes between youngsters and companies should be maintained at all times.

Therefore, just observing the company (visiting the company) or just working without shaping the experience in a systematic and targeted way would not count as an implementation of this methodology.

- Decision makers in schools, VET providers and companies must reflect and decide which steps should have which priority: depending on the situation and the resources available sometimes the identification of potential for further education and training will be a priority, in others exposing the youngsters to the social demands of real workplaces, in others to select appropriate candidates for specific training etc.. In all cases a reflection of these priorities should be made and the internship should be shaped accordingly. Here often the actors have different priorities, therefore these have to be negotiated and the priorities of all of the actors should be given a fair place in the program. Only in this way can the process be sustainable.
- Sub-steps can be tested. While the implementation of the complete process is desirable, most sub steps add value also in themselves.
- Tools that are already available and used in the specific environment can be integrated into the process, if this integration is reflected and targeted.
- Checklists and tools can be adapted. They can be copied and used by interns, company staff and internship guides/facilitators.
- The duration of the internship can vary depending on the context and the learning needs of the youngsters. Depending on the latter some steps can take longer and may necessitate a more intense facilitation and guidance.

The tools suggested focus on the process within the company. Schools/VET providers should support companies in using these tools. This focus has been chosen since only a focus on the company's needs will make sure that internships are offered on a continuing basis.

This methodology supports individualised matching processes, which are in the interest of employers, schools/VET providers and youngsters alike.
According to the wide testing experiences made the minimum duration of an internship is **5 full days** for youngsters who are still in school education.

It is an additional benefit for companies, that their own employees improve their competencies for the integration and training of youngsters and new employees.

Experiences in the project bevoplus as well as in a number of other projects, e.g. a project on building competencies of company staff with work-integrated training responsibilities, showed that the training of interns and new employees helps to review the processes in the business, to identify problems, to reflect un discussed routines, and therefore to improve the quality of the business and production processes. As it turned out, the training process is a learning process for parties, company staff and trainees alike. It is a quality assurance measure for the company to challenge itself to be able to explain well what is done and why and to expose itself to the questions of outsiders.

3. Tools for the Implementation of the Tol Steps

3.1 Planning Tol

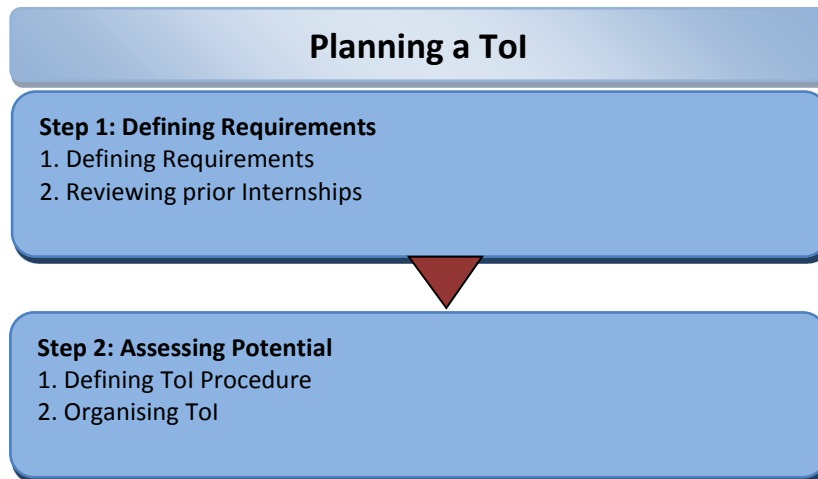


Fig. 2: Tol Planning

With the help of this checklist (cf. Zschel 2011) you can

- identify basic competencies which you would expect from future trainees/entry-level workers;
- add additional company/business or occupational requirements, and
- compare these requirements with the resources and capacities of your business/company.

Selected Tools for this Step

Checklist 3.1.1: Defining Requirements

Basic competencies/competences			
Vocational competencies/competences relevant for the specific task	Should these competencies/competences be assessed?		
	<i>Please mark your decision with a „X“</i>		
	Yes, because it is a prerequisite for a training placement/entry level job	Yes, because strengths and weaknesses in this competence should be assessed	No, will be developed during training/work in any case
Routine and Speed of Work (Skill, tolerance of stress)			
Handling of Tools an basic level (Motor skills, Concentration , Continuity)			
Cognition and Symmetry (Assess proportions, implementing templates etc.)			
Understanding Instructions, working according to instructions (understanding, interpreting correctly, implement carefully instructions)			
Using tools on a complex level (e.g. using several tools in a coordinated way)			
Precision and measurement accuracy (basic crafts skills like correct use of measurements, careful handling of tools, clean workmanship)			
Work Habits			
Attitude and interest			
Motivation			
Comprehension			
Ability to think			
Ability to focus/concentrate			
Working with minimal supervision			
Flexibility			
Carefulness			
Manual Skills			
Endurance			
Social/intercultural competencies			
Dealing with superiors			
Dealing with peers			
Dealing with customers			
Critical reflection/Self—awareness/self-evaluation			
Foreign language competencies			
Openness towards other cultures			

Learning Competencies			
The intern asks questions...			
- regarding the task			
- regarding work processes			
- regarding the scientific (or other) fundamentals of the task			
Career Planning Competencies			
The Youngster is able to see the connection between this internship and his/her future job/training prospects			
The Youngster is able to reflect his/her interests and abilities in relation to the requirements of this workplace/business/company			
Occupation-/Company specific Competencies			
<i>Please name the specific additional competencies you want to assess!</i>			

In this step you are invited to review internships you have organised up to now, or which are organised by companies or other agents (depending on the situation). Have they met the aims you have? Have they been functional for the identification of training/employment relevant competencies? Have they contributed to increase the social capital of the youngsters enough that their motivation increased and the transition from school to work or appropriate further education is strengthened?

In some cases no internships are organised during school time and only school/VET centre internal work experiences are provided.

These can also be assessed regarding their effectiveness based on this grid.

Tool 3.1.2: Reviewing prior Internships

Com- par- ison	VET/School based work experience		Prior Internship			Tot		
	Youngsters	VET provider/ School	Youngsters	Company	VET-Provider/ School	Youngsters	Company	VET-Provider/ School
Problem	Manual skills prerequisite for employability	Build practical skills	Have to get to know occupations	Introduce company/ occupation	Expose pupils to various companies	Encouragement and motivation through identified employment/training opportunities	Find more appropriate trainees/entry level employees	Encourage students to stay in the system by facilitating transition to work/employment
Aim	Identify and build practical skills, employment, further education	Facilitate transition to work through good practical skills appreciated by employers	Decide on training pathway	Raise interest for occupation/ company	Facilitate transition to training	To know employers To know requirements To identify own talents	Fulfil skill needs/HR needs, lowering risk of costly mismatches	Build social capital of students Expose students to employers Make options and requirements transparent through first hand contact
Implemen- tation	Do	Provide practical training	Identify alternatives, test competences	Present training options/entry employment options	Agree on placement without detailed structure	Build contacts Test talents Get feedback Keep in touch	Screen and motivate potential trainees/employees	Build network with potential employers and training companies in the community Assist organisation and structuring of internships

In order to integrate the requirements you have defined in the ToI, the following structure is recommended:

- Introduction: Raise interest in the occupation, job, company/business, etc.

- Implementation: Test and identify talent in action
- Evaluation: Review and evaluate documents, statements etc. about the internship

Depending on the duration of the internship these topics can be differentiated further.

The minimum duration for introduction and evaluation is one day each.
 The actual working period should be at least three days.

The template for a checklist for a ToI structure can be expanded according to your own needs. The checklist should be provided to the guiding staff as well as the interns. It can be used as a tool for the documentation of the internship.

Checklist 3.1.3: Defining ToI Schedule

Day 1: Introduction		Raising interest in job, occupation, company/business
Activities		
1	from ____ to ____	Example: safety at work
	from ____ to ____	
2	from ____ to ____	Example: safety at the specific workplace
	from ____ to ____	
3	from ____ to ____	
	from ____ to ____	
You should do in every case:		
4	from ____ to ____	Explaining the ToI
5	from ____ to ____	Tour of the company/business
		Introduction of guiding staff (buddy/mentor) other staff and their functions
6	from ____ to ____	Introduction to the occupation/job Media can be used, according to national availability, e.g. videos (in Germany e.g. http://berufenet.arbeitsagentur.de/berufe/)
		...
7	from ____ to ____	Explanation of the occupation/job in action/in the company
		...
Further content/activities		
1	from ____ to ____	Company clothing (if available), practical issues (transport, incentives, other...)
2	from ____ to ____	Meeting other trainees, junior staff
		Activities with the buddy/mentor
3	from ____ to ____	Activities of special interest to the intern
	

Day 2: Implementation		Identifying competencies/competences	Where? (Workplace) Responsible Employee
Activities			
1	from ____:____ to ____:____	Example: Using Tools	
	from ____:____ to ____:____		
2	from ____:____ to ____:____	Example: Measuring	
	from ____:____ to ____:____		
3	from ____:____ to ____:____	Persistence	
	from ____:____ to ____:____		

Checklist 3.1.4 provides an overview for each internship including all planned steps according to the tasks and competencies to be evaluated. The assessment columns should be filled-in along with the internship after completion of the respective task.

Checklist 3.1.4: Organising the ToI

	Step	Who? (Staff)	When?	What? (Competencies)	How? (Assessment of Potential)		
					not sufficient	can be developed	sufficient
				Personal, social, intercultural competencies	not sufficient	can be developed	sufficient
1	Introduction	Names	von _____ bis _____	s. Checklist 3.1.3			
2.	Implementation	Names	von _____ bis _____				
3.	Evaluation	Names	von _____ bis _____				

Schedule of Tol Implementation

Step 1: Guiding Tol

1. Instructing on how to guide Tol
2. Motivate Self-Assessment

Step 2: Evaluating Tol

1. Preparing evaluation discussion
2. Evaluation discussion
3. Certifying Tol

Selected Tools for this Step

The support and guidance of the internship is very critical for the success of the internship. The guiding staff must be aware of the aims and methodologies of the internship.

It proved to work well to deploy staff that the student can relate to. Often employees of a similar age, similar background or career are good guides/buddies. The aim is to give the student the idea that “if they made it, I can too” or “if they like it, it must be ok”.

However, the guide/buddy should always be realistic. He/she give a clear picture of the advantages/disadvantages, likes/dislikes of the job. It is good if he/she can talk about their own difficulties to find a good job and how they overcame it.

The company should make a point of discussing the strategic aims of the company in offering internships with these (younger) employees and there should be a degree of supervision, which however should make sure that the perspectives of different groups within the companies (manager, experienced, younger employees) are heard. This supervision should not be intrusive. It has proved to be a good learning assignment and productive challenge for younger staff to be responsible for presenting and describing the company.

The best result will be achieved if there is a joint session of all actors within the company as well as the school/VET provider.

All guiding staff should be aware of the task to encourage and motivate the youngsters, but also to make the requirements involved very clear.

Use the results of your planning (3.1) and hand out this checklist to the guiding staff.

Checklist 3.2.1: Instructing Tol Guidance

Suggestion for a team meeting of Tol guidance staff/Internship responsible/Internship mentor							
1	Explaining the aims of the Tol (company/school)	Tools	<table border="1"> <tr> <th colspan="2">Done</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </table>	Done		Yes	No
	Done						
	Yes	No					
Company motivation/school motivation, aims							
Overview of Tol	Checklist 3.1.1						
2	Explaining the steps	Checklist 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.1.4	<table border="1"> <tr> <th colspan="2">Done</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </table>	Done		Yes	No
	Done						
	Yes	No					
	Tasks introduction	Guideline chap. 2, 3 Company specific tools					
Tasks implementation							
Tasks evaluation							
Distribution of responsibilities	Feedback						

One of the main tasks of the guidance staff is to support the self evaluation of the interns. This self-evaluation should reveal the developmental potential of the intern with regard to

- the individual understanding of the tasks/assignments at hand,
- the individual motivation to execute the task,
- the individual ability and preparedness to self reflect and improve
- the preparation of the evaluative discussion.

The participants should receive the checklist 3.1.3 with the planned process and self-assessment aids. The necessary time to fill in these lists should be granted, as this in itself is a self reflective exercise.

P-Checklist 3.2.2: Self-Assessment

Self-Assessment Intern				
Name: _____ Surname: _____				
My Internship: Day 1-n		I executed this task:		
<i>Please rate the tasks according to the categories provided in the table</i>				
Task	good	sufficient	Not sufficient	Comment/Improvement
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
...	Others...			

P-Checklist 3.2.3: Overall Assessment

In my Tol....		I liked...		
	Description of the task/experience/situation	...very much	...not at all	Could be improved
1	Support by the company			
2	The tasks I had to do			
3	The explanations			
4	<i>Criteria to be defined by school/company/student</i>			
5				
...				

For the preparation of the first assessment dialogue you will need:

- the assessment of the internship mentor/buddy,
- the filled in documents/checklists,
- verbal feedback/statements interns/mentors/buddies
- a decision if contact with the intern should be maintained/ways to transfer recommend intern to other companies/agents.

This discussion results in a structured competencies development plan, which is discussed in the final meeting with the intern.

Checklist 3.2.4: Draft Development Plan

Development Plan for	
Name: _____ Surname: _____	
Points for development:	
1.	Occupational skills: ...
2.	Social competencies: ...
3.	Intercultural competencies: ...
4.	Learning competencies:
5.	Other company/job-related/occupational development aims: ...
Other agreements:	
1.	Recommended experiences/other internships/educational experiences:
2.	Contact with company/business:
3.	Remarks:
Place, Date:	
Signature Intern:	
Signature Company Responsible:	

Tool 3.2.5: Template Certificate

Certificate of Internship:

Mr./Ms.
completed an internship in our company from to

Mr./Ms.received an insight in the areas to follow:

1.
2.
3.

Mr./Ms. was assigned the tasks to follow:

1.
2.
3.

These tasks were executed with outstanding/high/...interest and motivation. His/her behaviour towards colleagues was courteous and polite. His/her behaviour towards customers was courteous and polite.

We certify that Mr./Ms., that he/she met our expectations in every way and wish him/her well for his/her future.

Place/Date

Signature/Company

Checklist 3.2.6: Assessment Discussion

Suggestion for Structure of Assessment Discussion			
1	Introduction	Tool	Notes
	Self Assessment	P-Checklist 3.2.2 and 3.2.3	
	Assessment by mentor/guidance staff	Documentation = Filled-in Checklist 3.1.4	
2	Discussing assessment		Notes
	Discussing agreement	Minutes	
	Discussing divergences, perspectives	Minutes, Flipchart	
3	Agreeing on development plan	Tool	Notes
	Explaining development plan	Checklist 3.2.4: Development Plan	
	Amending Development Plan	Integrating interests and suggestions of intern	
4	Closing discussion		
	Discussing perspectives	Both sides formulate perspectives	
	In case of agreement:	Sign development plan	
	Hand out certificate	Template 3.2.5: Internship certificate	

3.3 Reflecting and Fine-Tuning Tol

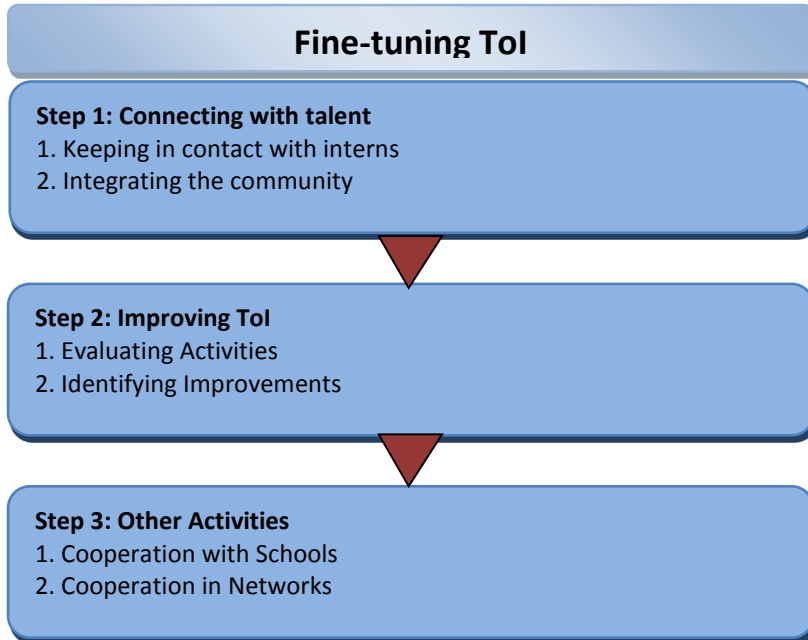


Fig. 3.3 Continuing Improvement Tol

Selected Tools for this Step

Checklist 3.3.1: Keeping in Contact with Interns

Suggestions for Keeping in Touch			
	Activity	Responsible	To do until...
1	Written Feedback on internship	Name	
2	If relevant: written explanation of training and/or employment opportunities in company in short or long term perspective (after about 1-2 months)	Name	
3	Invitation to events in the company/business (e. g. Christmas party, open day)	Name	
4	Invitation to trainee/apprentices/junior employees meetings	Name	
Other Activities			
	...		

This template can be adapted to include measures to involve the community in the activities. E.g. further educational pathways can be defined, contacts to relevant other businesses can be made. Often talents are identified which can be useful in another company. Sometimes other social activities like sports, community activities etc. can also support the competency development of the youngster. Particularly in the case of those youngsters at risk, social and pedagogical support can also be helpful.

In other cases additional educational modules or compensatory courses can be planned along initial employment/more extended internships.

The details of such measures depend on the specific legal context, but usually communities can shape reasonable support networks using the available resources.

Checklist 3.3.2: Evaluating Activities

Activities		Need for Improvement		Comment
		Yes	No	
1	Planning Tol			
	Identifying potential			
	Definition of Requirements			
	Tol Process			
	Tol-Organisation			
2	Implementation of Tol			
	Instructing guidance staff			
	Encouraging self assessment			
	Evaluating Tol			
	Assessment discussion			
	Certification			
3	Fine-tuning Tol			
	Keeping in touch			
	Keeping in touch with Youngsters			
	Networking within the Community			
	Informing the public			
	Improving Tol	<i>Define what should be done, by whom, when, how:</i>		
	Aims:			
	Measures:			
	Responsible:			
	Schedule:			

Checklist 3.3.3: Tol Marketing

Suggestions for Tol Marketing					
	Activities	Short description	Option		To do
			Yes	No	
1	Using own homepage	Networking social media, attractive presentation			
2	Presenting training opportunities	Fairs, Information events			
3	Motivating identification with the company/business	Intrinsic factors, career opportunities, branding			
4	Presenting opportunities in social media	Encouraging posting about opportunities by employees in social media			
	Other				

4. Other Methods to Provide Work-Experience Opportunities

A good cooperation between local and regional actors in general and schools, VET providers and companies and businesses, is key for the smooth transfer between the world of education and the world of working. Expanding and deepening such cooperation should be a key activity for schools, communities and businesses. Internships of some intensity are a tested best practice to implement such cooperation. However they require some legal and statutory prerequisites as well as established good networking relationships. If internships are not yet regulated or for other reasons not available, other forms of common activities can help to expose pupils to the world of work to some degree. These forms should also be used to prepare internships.

Three of these methods (visits to companies, workshops and coaching sessions with entrepreneurs, and job shadowing) are presented in brief in the next paragraphs.

Voluntary work is an excellent opportunity for students to build and showcase their competencies and skills, particularly their soft skills. Therefore some remarks on the value and organisation of voluntary work conclude this chapter.

Aims of visits to companies, sessions with entrepreneurs, and job shadowing

The aims of these activities are that young people

- become **acquainted with the expectations of companies** with regard to skills and competences of applicants for a job or an internship from first hand
- **get to know** a broad knowledge of potential **employers** in the region
- experience companies, their owners and current employees as **approachable**
- **establish** initial social **contacts** with potential employers and are therefore **encouraged to apply** for more in depth internship opportunities or mentoring
- **get to know potential peers** in companies and local businesses, who have similar pathways of education (potentially having experienced similar difficulties) and can serve as **role models** that successful pathways into employment exist
- gain criteria related to the labour market to **check their own skills and competencies**

On the whole the experiences described should contribute to **expanding the social capital** of the youth at risk. They should know the world of work better and in particular should establish contacts to concrete persons in nearby businesses, companies, organisations and administrations, which they can contact for advice and support on a continuing basis.

Thereby an abstract matching on an anonymous labour market along formal certifications and criteria should be replaced by a mutual holistic knowledge of the person of the student as well as a realistic and first-hand knowledge of concrete employers in the local and regional community.

4.1 Visits to companies

Organisational preparation

It is very important that the students develop an interest in a visit to a certain business, organisation or company.

Tutors should inform such interest in spreading information about

- Companies, businesses and other employers in the region. Often the focus is only on well known bigger companies or organisations. However, in fact **small and micro companies** are the backbone of employment. These companies are often not well known, do hire only every few years and will not be very pro-active in looking for new staff. Rather they will wait for the “right” candidate, who is often hired based on social relations, recommendations etc. Therefore it will need some effort to find and make contact to such companies and it is a big part of the work of mentors and tutors to facilitate a good matchmaking, e.e. interest the right student for the potentially right company and the right person for the right company. Information will rarely be publically available and must therefore be retrieved by face-to-face contact. Retrieving such information can also be a good project task for students
- **Realistic idea about the effort** it takes to find an employer. Often particularly weaker pupils are easily discouraged. They will conclude from three or four unsuccessful applications for an internship or job, that “there is no work”. This however is unrealistic. Also current employees have often looked for a job for a long time and have applied dozens of times. Looking for internships and training can be a “full time job”. This is the realistic expectation and visits to companies to make contacts and gather information is an initial step in this process of building a realistic idea of the career finding and building process.

The students should describe as precisely as possible, what they want to learn from the visit. To be convinced of the profit of visiting a certain company is a prerequisite of a successful visit. This is true for the students, but also for the company, which is prepared to host a visit.

Most of the motivations described for the case of internships also apply here. For students visits expand their knowledge of training and employment opportunities, enhance their social capital (individual network) etc. Companies and organisations can get to know a high number of potential employees with a very limited effort. Many experienced HR responsables but also small company owners know the value of genuine face to face impressions. Visits can make the company in general better known and a higher number of young people will apply, enhancing the choices for the company. Being better known among teachers, tutors and trainers will improve the information about the company disseminated by these multipliers, which leads to better matches.

Therefore the teacher/trainer should contact the companies and organisations to be visited and discuss in detail the expectations from the visit as well as the expectations and requirements of the company. The teacher/trainer should motivate the students to inform themselves about the company (e.g. branch, products, production sites, number of employees, job offers, apprenticeship and internship offers).

Pedagogical preparation and interpretation

In order to prepare the young people for a visit the teacher/trainer should discuss with them, what can be expected from a visit to the respective company, which profit they can gain from it.

The students should be acquainted with questions, which will open for them the experiences of the world of work. The teacher/trainer should discuss the following central questions with the young people. These questions are only indicative.

A **preparatory session** with the students should list the questions to be researched during the visit.

Central questions:

- Which are the main characteristics/products/achievements of the company³?
- How many workers are employed in the company?
- What were the typical pathways of the current employees into the company?
- Which are the qualification levels of the employed workers?
- Are there employees in the company who live in the neighbourhood of the student, belongs to the same sports club?
- Other potential points of contact?
- What do the employees like in their work?
- What inspires them and how does the work give them satisfaction?
- What surprised them when they started to work for the company?
- Is the most important thing someone who wants to be attractive for the company needs to know/do?

Formal regulations/practical questions:

- At which time normally the workday starts? At which time is it finished?
- Getting there
- Etc....

- Which **tasks** seem to be most interesting for the students?

2 or 3 tasks, which are estimated as most interesting by the students for themselves should be studied in more detail:

- What is the product or service to be produced by the respective task?
- Which (basic) materials and components are needed for processing the task?
- (If applicable :) Which tools are needed for processing the task?
- With which colleagues/teams/sections have the workers to communicate or coordinate the procedure?
- Which is the topic of the coordination?
- Patterns of team work and communication?
- Which skills and competences the employees need?
- Which are the job specifications and the needed competences for a job in this section?
- How crucial are competences in mathematics, literacy, and language skills? Why are they important? What's the use of them in the work process?
- How can the students acquire the necessary skills and competences?

³ also small and micro businesses of all sectors

If the students cannot answer a question by observing, they should ask the guide or his/her colleagues. They will explain them all details.

In all cases the company visit should be analysed and discussed afterwards!

Individual or group discussions should help the student to become aware of what he/she has experienced and what the relevance is for him/her.

Points to be discussed include:

- Main points observed
- Most impressive experiences
- Most surprising information
- Contacts made
- Lessons learned
- Concrete next step to make use of the new insights

4.2 Workshops and coaching sessions with entrepreneurs

Value and organisational preparation

The same principles for the preparation of the event as for company visits apply.

It is very important that the students are interested in a workshop or a coaching session with entrepreneurs, business owners or company representatives apply.

The students should describe as precisely as possible, what they want to learn from the company representatives. To be convinced of the profit of a session with entrepreneurs is a prerequisite of a successful workshop or coaching session. This is true for the students, but also for the company representatives, who are ready to share their experiences on the world of work with the students and to present and discuss the job specification and demands of their company.

Then the teacher/trainer should contact one or more companies and discuss in detail the expectations from the workshop or coaching session as well as the expectations and requirements of the company representatives.

The teacher/trainer should motivate the students to inform themselves about the invited companies (e.g. branch, products, production sites, number of employees, job offers, apprenticeship and internship offers).

While often the business owner or manager is the best representative of the company, often also **experienced workers with a similar background as the students, young employees or apprentices can also be very valuable company representatives.**

Often the latter are an opportunity for the students to identify with a person quite similar to themselves. They can see themselves in their place. Many companies nowadays have use this effect and

send their apprentices or junior employees to schools, make them mentors for trainees or interns and encourage them to present the company in social networks.

Therefore schools should make sure that they choose company representatives which provide the best contact point for the student also after the visit.

Often an initial presentation by the owner/manager that is supplemented by a Q&A with “peer” employees, which offer to be contacted also after the visit is a good combination.

Pedagogical preparation

In order to prepare the young people for a workshop or a coaching session with entrepreneurs the teacher/trainer should discuss with them, what can be expected from a session with a company representative and which profit they can gain from it.

The students should be acquainted with questions, which will open to them the experiences of the world of work reported by a company representative. The teacher/trainer should discuss the following central questions with the young people. These questions are only proposals, which can be replaced or supplemented.

Central questions:

If there are more companies than one present in the session, the questions should be answered separately by each company.

The same questions to be asked apply as in the company visits.

Speakers from the company should be asked to share their best advice on how to overcome difficulties in the individual formation process. Also people who are successful today may have faced their own difficulties on the way. Sharing stories about how they overcame these difficulties can be encouraging for students in risk.

Asking for such stories can help the company representatives of their own youth and may encourage them to empathise with the youth in risk and to offer support.

There should be a **focus on Q&A with the representatives of the companies**, not only a presentation.

The speaker needs to get a realistic impression of the hopes, thoughts and concerns of the pupils. Only if he/she is aware of these thoughts he/she can react to them in a “**coaching**” like way, i.e. give useful advice to the students.

Ideally the speaker will offer to be contacted by the students also after the meeting.

A **mentoring** relationship can result from this.

After the workshop or coaching session the teacher/trainer should analyse the answers to the central questions with the young people and discuss the conclusions: What did the students learn from the session with the company representatives?

What will be the concrete next step?

The structure of de-briefing described in 4.1 applies.

4.3 Job shadowing

Value and organisational preparation

Job shadowing requires substantially more preparation and commitment compared to company visits or company preparations in schools.

While students mostly are not required to become particularly active during the shadowing, a “shadow” is quite an intrusion to the normal work routine. Therefore a level of trust is required and the benefit for the company must be evident in order to justify the investment.

Therefore schools and VET providers should invest some effort in discussing this benefit with the companies (see 4.1 for the main arguments).

Particularly for this reason, only students with a minimum level of motivation should be allowed to participate.

Ideally student and shadowing partner or student and company representative have met before during a company visit or company presentation and can relate to each other.

The teacher/trainer should motivate the student to inform himself/herself about the company (e.g. branch, products, production sites, number of employees, job offers, apprenticeship and internship offers) and prepare things he/she wants to observe and/or ask during the shadowing.

In preparation of a job shadowing the student himself/herself should contact the company and agree on the date of the job shadowing and make an initial contact.

The student should prepare a competent **self-introduction**, which should

- explain the interest in the shadowing
- the appreciation for the opportunity
- an explanation of the current topics in school
- previous experiences
- the motivation for the shadowing
- the rationale for selecting the specific job to be shadowed.

The pedagogical preparation should cover this.

Time, place and duration should be negotiated with the company, taking the typical sequence of the job shadow into account.

The duration should be sufficient to get an impression of relevant core tasks and duties.

It should allow for assessing the complexity and give enough time to build contact and rapport with the employee shadowed.

The matching of students and jobs shadowed is critical.

Students should shadow employees that perform tasks/jobs that are accessible for the student (qualification level, region, time needed to acquire qualification/competence).

Tutors here need some sensitivity to **choose placements which are inspiring, yet accessible**. While some students should be encouraged to aim high by exposing them to jobs that might be accessible if they make a really huge effort, others should be exposed to positions into which the path is short, since they need a fast experience of success in order to keep them from dropping out.

The employees shadowed should be briefed about the intention of the shadowing. They should be encouraged to explain the job, describe their way into this occupation. Whenever possible they should present the job as accessible for the student. However they should also point out critical requirements and make clear that some effort will be required to qualify for the position.

The guiding idea of the matching should be to give the student the assurance that “if she/he can do it, I can as well”. This way the youth at risk is given a realistic perspective and gives sense to his/her learning and finishing school.

Pedagogical preparation and interpretation

In order to prepare the young people for the job shadowing the teacher/trainer should discuss with them, what can be expected from a job shadowing, which profit they can gain from it.

The students should be acquainted with questions, which will open to them the experiences of the world of work. The teacher/trainer should discuss the following central questions with the young people. The same process and questions as described in 4.1 apply.

The assessment of the lessons learned from the shadowing follows the structure described for 4.1, though in more depth and length, since also the experience was more intense.

As the shadowing usually is an individual experience sharing the impressions and lessons learned in a group can add value by sharing information, therefore giving the peer students at least an idea of the job and the company visited.

Talking about the experience will help to deepen the experience and reflect the lessons to be learned.

Also here in all cases a discussion of concrete next steps should conclude the debriefing session.

4.4 Voluntary Work

Value and organisational preparation

Voluntary work provides the opportunity to demonstrate a lot of functional and extra functional competences and competencies without the burden of negotiating internships or the like with companies.

Classical management thinkers like Peter Drucker emphasise the value of work in non profit organisation and their system of training and organising volunteers.

Working in a field that genuinely **inspires** the volunteer, be it a charity, a sports club, volunteering to help organising a community event etc. can be expected to bring out the best in the individual.

The idea that achieving something tangible and constructive together with others can actually be fun and gratifying is formed.

Most students will know some of those organisations, but probably not many. It is the task of the teacher/tutor to help to explore the field and/or to support the student to research potential organisations. Community organisers may be able to help.

Organisations should be contacted to explore deployment opportunities further.

In contrast to company visits and job shadowing voluntary work often will be more long term. This is a particular value, as it allows the individual to develop its competences gradually.

Also in the case of voluntary work a **good matching is critical**.

A phase in which candidates can explore multiple opportunities without already committing to a long term engagement can help to avoid mutual frustration.

Tutors should support organisations in formulating minimal requirements. Also students should think about what type of engagement could be attractive.

Types of commitment and terms of commitment vary; therefore it is hard to give overall guidance on this.

In any case the tutor/mentor should ask for current voluntary work of the student regularly and should encourage such work.

Pedagogical preparation and interpretation

Tutors should discuss the value of voluntary work with students. They should emphasize the attractiveness and value of the experience more than the functional value for professional formation.

However they should also point out that soft skills like team work, organisational skills, marketing, communication, initiative, even entrepreneurship can be trained and developed in the scope of voluntary work. Often organisational, legal and institutional barriers here are lower.

Youth organisations are classical examples of young people being put in charge early in their lives.

The main point for tutors and mentors of youth in risk is to

- encourage engagement and
- help to **identify and communicate competencies** achieved.

Most of the learning through voluntary work will be informal. Therefore tutors and mentors should help students to think about what they have done and what competences they have developed.

For example if the student has helped to organise the summer party in the sports club he/she will probably have used organisational skills, will have worked in a team, will have communicated with his peers, will have had to be punctual and persistent etc.

These extra functional competences can be listed.

In a next step tutor and student can think about:

- On which occasions have I used this competence?
- How often?
- How long?
- At which level of competence?

The results of this reflection can be used in various ways:

The tutor will be able to present the student to companies and other partners with a **broader portfolio** of competences, including references to concrete examples of experiences and achievements that substantiate the claims of competence/talent.

Also the student will be better able to **talk about him/herself**, based on confidence gained by concrete experiences and achievements.

This will improve the chances to be accepted for other learning opportunities.

Mentors and/or responsible in organisations which host the voluntary work can be asked to provide the volunteer with **references/recommendation letters** based on the work done and the competences shown.

As many such **organisations and their long term activists are respected and well known actors within the local/regional community** and/or belong to well respected organisations as sports clubs, the Red Cross, Caritas, the Bay Scouts etc. **their reference will** have to be deserved, but will **be very relevant also for the employers within the community**.

Last but not least many such organisations consist of responsible and emphatic individuals from many backgrounds. Many of them work in companies and organisations. They are individual, non-intimidating **access points to the employment system** and/or mentors for other educational pathways and therefore knowing them from common voluntary work is important social capital for the youth in risk.

Coaching and mentoring of youth in risk should always take account of such opportunities.

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