The 2nd transnational meeting of the Early School Workers Erasmus + was held on the 8th of May in Brescia, Italy.

The project aims at supporting the renovation of VET systems in Europe with ultimate goal of tackling Early School Leaving and increasing the employability of youngsters while fostering their active role in the society. More specifically, we focused on the transferability model, where from model we will start to create a model of the UTC schools, including organisational, pedagogical and didactic variables that can be transferred to all contexts. The WP’s focuses on UK University Technical Colleges (UTCs) of their school-based enterprise experience.

Methodology of Guidelines for set of recommendations and practical indications that represent consensus of a scientific community are:

- Differentiate the school space
- To encourage change, we need to reconsider the organisation of the school space, providing for more types of settings
- Technological equipment complaint with company’s needs.

EfVET presented the main dissemination activities of the project. In this respect, EfVET created the dissemination and communication strategy plan, set up the ESW Facebook page, helped to created awareness among different stakeholders about the when it comes to the next steps, EfVET will keep producing next newsletter s for the ESW project, and website.

On the second day, the consensus conference was organised by ENAC. The conference explored the new identity of VET centres lies at the intersection between school and work, as several international and national experiences show. This Consensus Conference represents an important moment to read, discuss and validate the UICs Transferability Guidelines with the support of experts and relevant stakeholders. Different international and national experiences indicate the new identity of the training centres in the interweaving between school and work: an amphibious identity, so to speak, which embraces and unifies both the needs of learning and those of progressive employment.

The Erasmus + project “ESW – EARLY SCHOOL WORKERS” (2018-1-IT01-KA202-006754) is confronted with significant experience, that of the UTC (University Technical College), to try to outline a transferable model of training enterprise, through the detail, in the form of Guidelines, of its constituent elements.
Train the trainers in Foggia

According to the project, each partner has to carry out an internal training for the members of the staff in order to inform and coach as much teachers/trainers as possible on the UTC model.

The Italian partners (ENAC and ENDOFAP) organised a joined training in Foggia during last July. The 2 days training involved 26 staff members with different roles in the VET centers: coordinators, teachers, trainers as well as principals. During the first day the Project Manager Luca Calligaro introduced the Early School Workers project and Prof. Emanuele Serrelli explained the basic elements that underpin the UTC model. The participants had the chance to go through the UTC guidelines and have an explanation of the model from the group of teachers that visited the UTC Warrington in November 2018.

At the end of the day Prof. Roberto Franchini talked about Project Based Learning & Enrichment Activities, two interactive methodology applied at UTC Warrington and the participants discussed how these elements could be embedded in the local context.

The following day ENDOFAP trainers shared some tools and general considerations about the importance of the soft skills in the curriculum delivered in the Italian VET centers. The rest of the morning was spent in working groups reflecting on soft skills and PBL activities and how to include them in the VET center activities. The training will continue in November with another 2 intensive days in Piacenza. Stay tuned to have more information.

Second training in Manchester

From 14th of October to 16th of October took place in Warrington the second training activity of the ESW project. Twelve staff members from the partner organisations visited UTC Warrington for the second time with the aim of receiving a specific training on PBL activities. The 3 days intensive programme was successfully delivered by UTCW staff.

During the first day of the activities, UTCW staff provided an overview of PBL which can be considered a method to “keep students away from the normal classroom”. PBL is an approach that emphasizes learning activities that are long-term, interdisciplinary, and student-centred. UTCW staff clearly pointed out that it is not easy to apply this model and you cannot give for granted the engagement of the students during the activities. It’s important to put PBL into specific context for the students and to explain what’s in for them. With PBL it’s important to make clear to the students why they are learning it!

The secret is to empower students to do something and change the academic environment. Students that struggle in the academic environment with PBL can achieve good results.

The key principles that UTCW apply in order to involve the students in the PBL are the following:

* Using real-word learning experience. The challenge needs to be an authentic project, moreover if the context/challenge are found outside the school it will appear more real Projects should emerge from needs in the community or home; they arise from social issues, or perhaps physical, emotional, or recreational needs

* Some can be linked with industry or business activities. At the same time roles in the class are flipped. Teachers do not lead anymore, but the students lead and they work in small groups with their pairs.

The teachers become just facilitators. It’s important to understand that PBL is not about making things easy for the students, but make them difficult because the word of work will be difficult and challenging and complex. The point is to get students outside their comfort zone. After a clear presentation about “Why should schools do?”, and “What are the benefits?”, the partners received an overview of how to design a curriculum with PBL. The most important part was to observe PBL in practice and how is delivered at UTCW. During the following days partners had the opportunity to attend several PBL activities.
UTC Warrington is Good in all areas

2019 is an excellent year for the UTCs. Since the start of 2019 14 UTCs have been inspected by Ofsted: UTC South Durham, UTC Sheffield OLP, WMG Academy for Young Engineers (Solihull), Global Academy, UTC Warrington, UTC Norfolk, Crewe UTC and Lincoln UTC have all been judged as Good. Energy Coast UTC was judged ‘Outstanding’!

UTC Warrington had its first Ofsted inspection in May 2019. During the inspection the work of all staff and students at the UTC has been formally recognised by Ofsted. UTC Warrington delivers a high quality academic and technical curriculum, with support from our employer and university partners, to deliver a unique learning experience for our students, linking all aspects of our specialisms – Science, Technology and Engineering.

This achievement at UTC Warrington demonstrates that the technical education offered by this institution at Key Stage 4 and Sixth Form is of high quality and that they are successful in preparing students for the world of work and helping them secure their future careers. This Ofsted judgement shows how much progress UTCW have made in delivering an excellent UTC experience for our students. This achievement arrives after one year of life of ESW project and encourage all partners to study further the UTC model and replicate it in other context.

Knowing, Modeling and Transferring: Intellectual Output 1 (O1) of the Early School Workers Project

Intellectual Outputs are an important element of any international project. They are the base for sharing, a concrete tool for working together, and a public product not only for the funding agencies but also for society at large.

The first phase of Early School Workers was scheduled to produce Intellectual Output 1 (IO1): “Critical Review on the UTC model and Concept model (guidelines) for its transferability in the Italian, Spanish and German context”.

The output is now available in the four languages of the project. Its realisation was made possible by a project-wide collaboration, not only by the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore research group who led the process and finalised the product. Crucial steps of this process were the on-site training in Warrington, UK (November 2018) and the Consensus Conference in Brescia, Italy (May 2019). IO1, available on the project’s website and presented with the catchy graphics of Early School Workers, is made up of five sections, accompanying the reader to know University Technical Colleges and UTC Warrington in particular, then extracting the “concept model” of UTC (with its pedagogical, didactic and organisational features), and finally drawing the “transferability guidelines” – open and modular – for “exporting” the UTC methodology in other contexts.
Video interviews

Interview with Emanuele Serelli | Professor at the Catholic University of Sacred Heart (Università Cattolica).

Interview with Lee Barber | Principal & Chief Executive - UTC Warrington

Frames from ESW - Interview with Luca Calligaro | EU Project Manager - ENAC

Partners