



NET-TRAINERS 2

Evaluation Report

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Pilot training of Net-Trainers in 9 language versions – Results from Evaluation



Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci

Pilot projects

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1 EVALUATION OF THE NET-TRAINERS PILOT TRAINING

Within this Net-Trainers 2 project the pilot training in six new languages was a major goal. Running the pilot training provided the new partners with important experiences for further training sessions. The formal way to collect experiences with the pilot training is the evaluation plan for the pilot training.

This evaluation plan was divided in several work packages from setup of evaluation instruments (activity 2.5.1-2.5.2) to implementing and reporting the results of the evaluation to the project coordinator (activity 4.1.1). Finally results were collected in this evaluation report (activity 4.1.2).

Beside the pilot training providers of the already existing language versions (English, French, and German) did also participate in the evaluation. Results from 'new' and 'old' providers can be compared.

1.1 AIMS AND METHOD OF EVALUATION

The evaluation of the pilot training aimed at providing information about strong and weak points of the Net-Trainers training to all providers and to the European Net-Trainers Association (ENTA). Based on the results providers and ENTA should be enabled to plan revisions of the training on a general and national level.

The evaluation is fully based on learners' response to different aspects of the course. These aspects were evaluated on different levels and at different times in the training using online and electronic questionnaires (see following chapters).

1.2 LEVELS OF EVALUATION

In order to get a comprehensive evaluation of the pilot training that reveals clear hints for the improvement of the course the evaluation was carried out on three levels:

- level of units (at the end of each learning unit)
- level of modules (at the end of each module)
- course level (at the end of the course)

Questionnaires used at the different levels, aspects evaluated and results are reported in the following chapters.

2 EVALUATION AT THE LEVEL OF UNITS

2.1 EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

Each of the five Net Trainers modules consists of several units. Units are the smallest entity of the training. They consist of:

- One or more learning objectives that are part of the common training framework and correspond to a qualification described in the Net Trainers job profile.
- Learning content that is needed to achieve the learning objective.
- One or more learning activities that facilitate the achievement of the learning objective.

Unit No.	Unit name
Module 1	
Unit 1.01	Welcoming and first exploration.
Unit 1.02	Planning one's learning path and contract.
Unit 1.03	Continued access and security
Unit 1.04	Constituting small groups
Unit 1.05	ICT for learning online
Unit 1.06	Active communication by distance
Unit 1.07	Chat communication
Unit 1.08	European aspects of the Net-Trainers training
Module 2	
Unit 2.01	Concepts and challenges of net-training.
Unit 2.02	Net-training and educational models
Unit 2.03	Principles of net-training
Unit 2.04	Net-training in Europe
Unit 2.05	Individual distant learning needs Unit
Unit 2.06	Development of a draft net-training project
Module 3	
Unit 3.01	Advising potential learners and assessing their needs .
Unit 3.02	Contract learning and individual learning path
Unit 3.03	Individual and group phases
Unit 3.04	Planning a work schedule
Unit 3.05	Motivation
Unit 3.06	Promoting Cooperation
Unit 3.07	Individual needs
Unit 3.08	Reflective attitude
Unit 3.09	Active listening

Unit 3.10	Facing difficulties
Unit 3.11	Training assessment
Unit 3.12	Analysis of one's own practise
Module 4	
Unit 4.01	To develop a pedagogical and support specification
Unit 4.02	Understand accessibility aspects of the tools
Unit 4.03	Understand the technology appropriate for online learning
Unit 4.04	Gather and analyse existing learning resources
Unit 4.05	Develop and create a specification for net-learning
Module 5	
Unit 5.01	The need of competencies for the net-training project
Unit 5.02	Motivation of the professionals
Unit 5.03	The project means and resources
Unit 5.04	Complete presentation of the net-training project

Table 1: Units of the Net-Trainers training

At the end of each learning unit learners were asked to fill in an online questionnaire (see Figure 1). The online questionnaire included the following questions:

- How challenging did you find this unit?
- About the Unit you have just completed:
 - Q1: Do you think the instructional contents are consistent with the learning objectives of the unit?
 - Q2: Do you think the learning activities are consistent with the learning objectives of the unit?
 - Q3: How long did it take you to complete this unit?

The screenshot shows a web-based evaluation form. At the top, there are navigation tabs: Content, Evaluation (selected), Communication, and Library. A 'Logout' link is visible in the top right. The form is titled 'Evaluation' and contains the following fields and questions:

- Full Name :** Thomas Jechle
- Organisation :** SYFEC
- Number of Unit :** 1.01
- How challenging did you find this unit?** (Dropdown menu: 1. Not challenging at all, 2. Not very challenging, 3. Quite challenging, 4. Very challenging)
- About the Unit you have just completed :** (Dropdown menu: 1. Not challenging at all, 2. Not very challenging, 3. Quite challenging, 4. Very challenging)
- Q1 :** Do you think the instructional contents are consistent with the learning objectives of the unit ? (Dropdown menu: 1. Not at all)
- Q2 :** Do you think the learning activities are consistent with the learning objectives of the unit ? (Dropdown menu: 1. Not at all)
- Q3 :** How long did it take you to complete this unit? (content background reading, communication and activity) (Text input field with 'Fill in' and 'minutes' labels)

A 'Submit' button is located at the bottom of the form. The footer of the page reads 'Powered by allWeb Solutions'.

Figure 1: Screenshot of the Online Questionnaire for Units in the English NT version

The answers were collected in a database implemented on the training platform. Data from this database are the basis for the following analysis and were prepared in the following way for the statistical analysis:

- Test entries from tutors were identified and deleted
- Multiple entries from the same learner on the same unit were identified. In each case the most recent entry was included in the analysis and the older ones were deleted
- Sometimes learners responded with extreme values that were either test entries or obvious mistakes. Extreme values (more than 2 times standard deviance) were identified and deleted.

2.2 EVALUATION RESULTS

2.2.1 CHALLENGE BY THE UNIT

In the first question of the online questionnaire learners were asked to rate to what extent they felt challenged by the unit. The values of rating scale were (1) not challenging at all, (2) not very challenging, (3) quite challenging, and (4) very challenging.

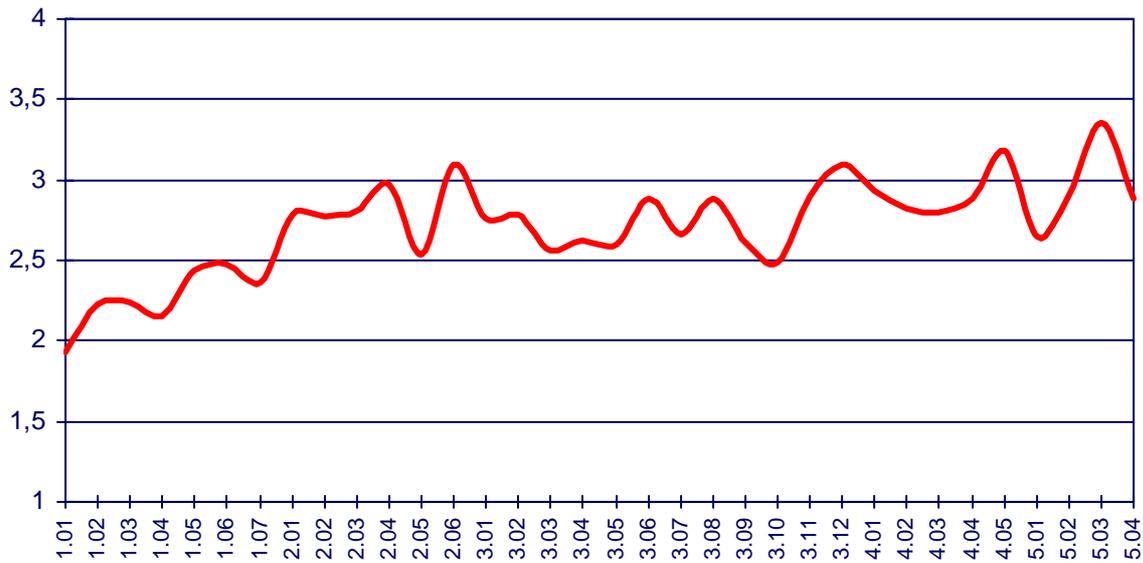


Figure 2: Means for Challenge

Across the training learners feel more and more challenged. During the first module (introduction) rating for challenge is between 1.93 and 2.48. For units in module 2 and 3 challenge is between 2.49 and 3.09. Challenge is highest for units in module 4 (between 2.8 and 3.18) and 5 (between 2.65 and 3.36). Units with a challenge index above 3.0 are:

- 2.06: Development of a draft net-training project
- 3.12: Analysis of one’s own practise
- 4.05: Develop and create a specification for net-learning
- 5.03: The project means and resources

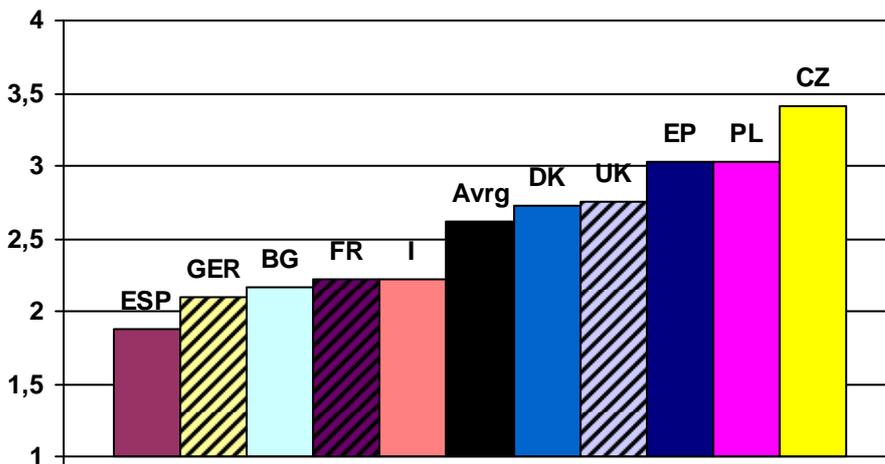


Figure 3: National Means for Challenge

Regarding the overall mean for the rating of challenge there are considerable differences among Czech learners ($x = 3,41$) and Spanish learners (1,87). All other national means are between 2,0 and 3,0. Two of the ‘old’ providers have

means below the average and one above. Not surprisingly, Europath learners (EP, $x = 3,03$) feel more challenged than the average.

Feelings of challenge are subjective and are dependant from aspects like pre knowledge, workload, and individual time budget. Nevertheless, differences among national means should be observed.

2.2.2 LEARNING TIME

At the end of each unit learners were asked to note the time they have spent on it. However, reliability of responses on this question turned out to be low because the number of responses decreases heavily throughout the course. A complete set of responses on items with a sufficient number of responses for each item does only exist for the British, Czech and Italian learning groups. Therefore, the analysis of results is limited to means for learners of all providers or differences between the three providers mentioned above. In addition, it is questionable whether learners really indicated the whole amount of time (including communicative and collaborative activities) they spent on the units. The question used in the questionnaire may be too imprecise in this point and need revision in future runs of this evaluation.

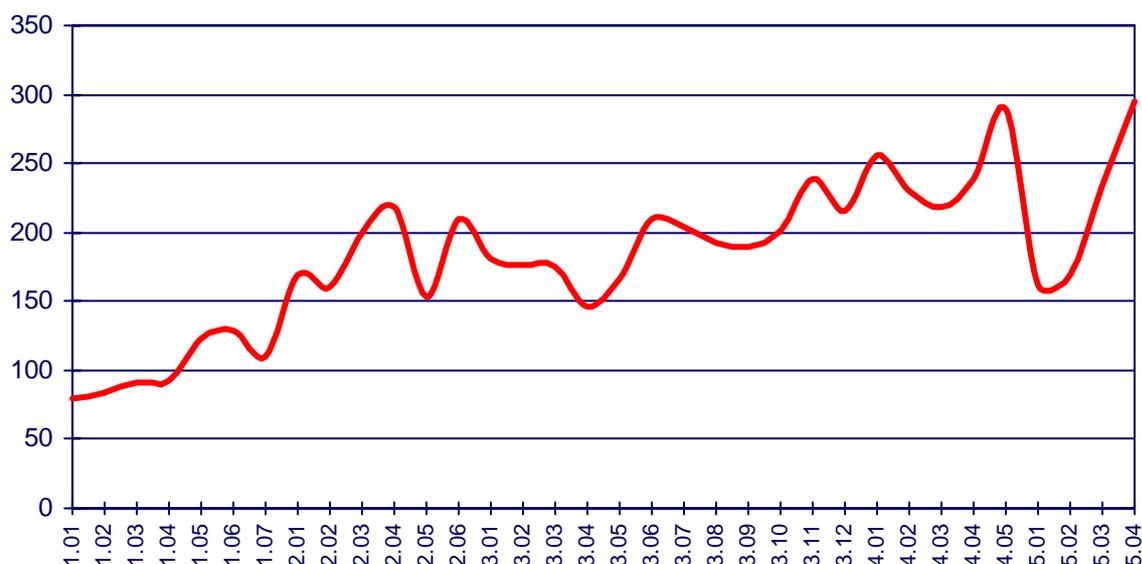


Figure 4: Means for time (in minutes) spent on units

The measures on time roughly confirm the learners' estimation of challenge: Time spent on units increases throughout the course. For units in module 1 learners have spent between 79 min. (unit 1.01) and 128 min. (unit 1.06). For units in module 2 and 3 learning time is between 145 min. (unit 3.04) and 222 min. (unit 3.11). Learning time is highest for units in module 4 (between 161 min. and 289 min.) and 5 (between 161 min. and 295 min.). Units with a learning time above 240 min. are:

- 4.01: To develop a pedagogical and support specification
- 4.05: Develop and create a specification for net-learning
- 5.04: Complete presentation of the net-training project

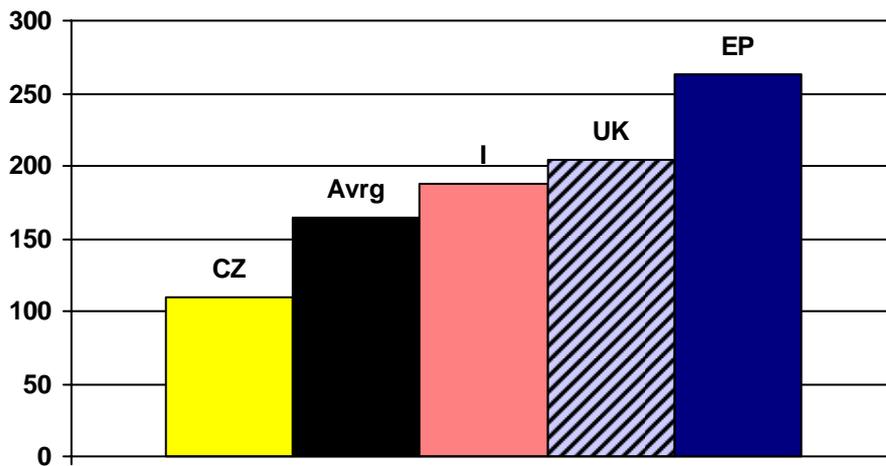


Figure 5: Mean learning time per unit

Figure 5 shows the mean learning time per unit for those national learning groups who delivered a sufficient amount of data. Comparing the mean learning time with the previous rating on challenge data from the Czech group are striking: Czech learners feel quite challenged by the learning units but spend less time than other national groups. Not surprising, on the other hand, is the result that learners on the Europath spend more learning time on the units (of module 3) than other learners.

The overall learning time for this course was estimated as 160 hours including all readings, fulfilling assignments as well as time for communication and collaboration with tutors and members of the learning group. Learning time reported by learners is clearly lower (105 hours). This is especially true for learning time in module 3 and 4.

Regarding the three providers with reliable and complete data the British learners have most (131 hours) and the Czech learners least learning time (74 hours). Italian learners are quite close to the overall mean (111 hours).

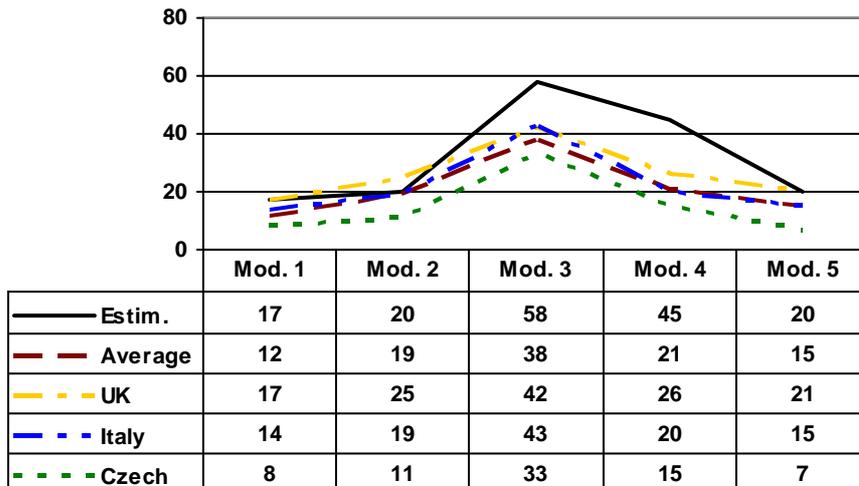


Figure 6: Estimated, average, maximal (UK) and minimal (Czech) learning time

Figure 7 reveals that Europath learners need about 40% more time (53 hours) than average learners (38 hours) to fulfil units of module 3.

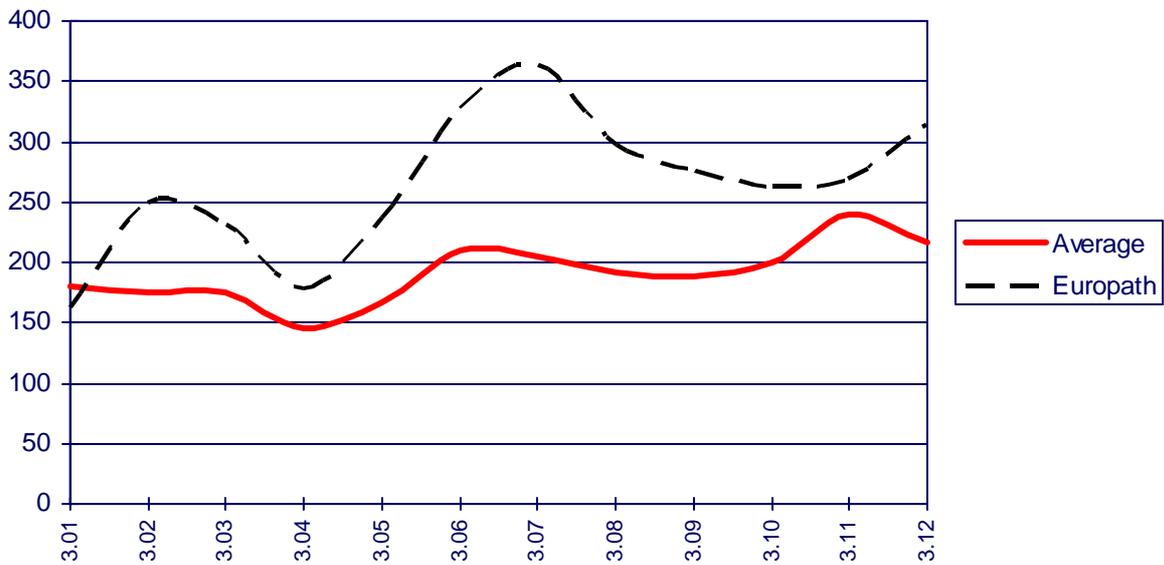


Figure 7: Means on learning time for Europath learners compared to average

2.2.3 CONSISTENCE OF CONTENTS AND ACTIVITIES WITH LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After each unit learners were asked to rate whether they feel that contents and activities are consistent with the learning objectives of the respective unit.

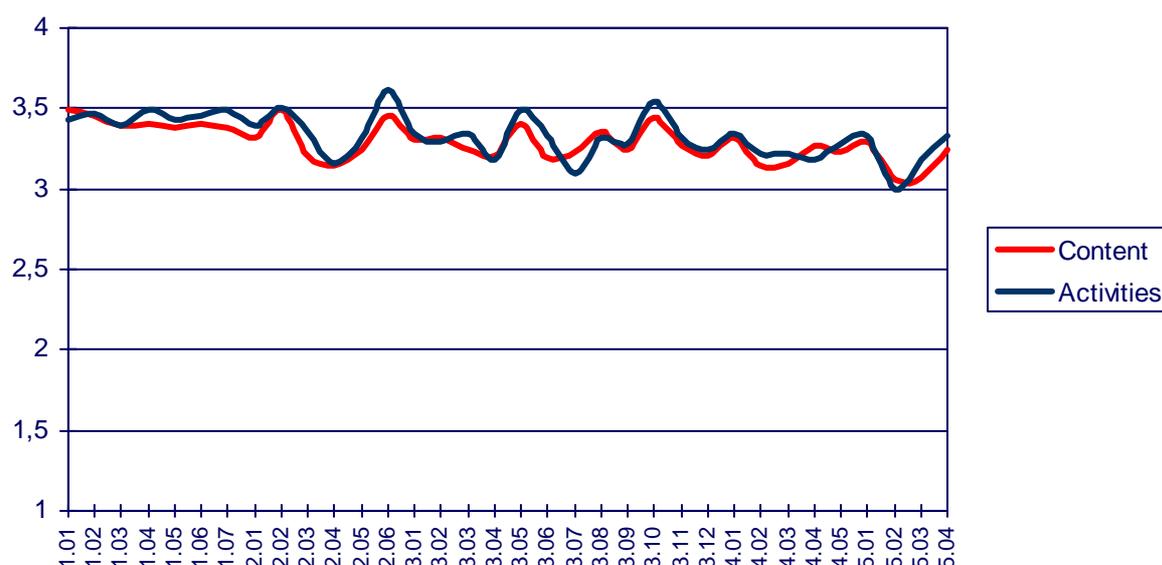


Figure 8: Means for consistence of learning content and activities

Means for consistence of learning content and learning activities with learning objectives are very similar and always in a positive range of above 3.0.

The highest five ratings for consistence of content and activities are related to the following units:

Pos.	Content	Activity
1.	1.01: Welcoming and first exploration (3,49)	2.06: Development of a draft net-training project (3,61)
2.	2.02: Net-training and educational models (3,49)	3.10: Facing difficulties (3,54)
3.	1.02: Planning one's learning path and contract (3,45)	2.02: Net-training and educational models (3,51)
4.	2.06: Development of a draft net-training project (3,45)	1.04: Constituting small groups (3,49)
5.	3.10: Facing difficulties (3,44)	3.05: Motivation (3,49)

Table 2: The five units with highest overall ratings for consistence of content and activity with learning objectives

The lowest five ratings for content and activities are related to the following units:

Pos.	Content	Activity
1.	5.02: Motivation of the professionals (3,06)	5.02: Motivation of the professionals (3,0)
2.	5.03: The project means and resources (3,07)	3.07: Individual needs (3,09)
3.	4.02: Understand accessibility aspects of the tools (3,14)	2.04: Net-training in Europe (3,16)
4.	2.04: Net-training in Europe	3.04: Planning a work schedule

	(3,15)	(3,18)
5.	4.03: Understand the technology appropriate for online learning (3,16)	5.03: The project means and resources (3,18)

Table 3: The five units with lowest overall ratings for consistence of content and activity with learning objectives

Even if the lowest ratings are still in a positive range the rating for the common unit “Net-Training in Europe” is disappointing. A revision seems to be necessary to raise the consistence of content and activity of this unit with its learning objectives.

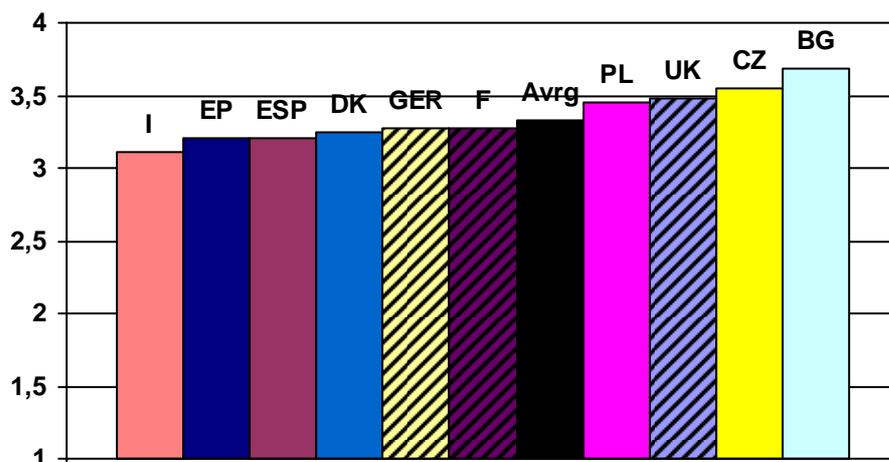


Figure 9: National means for consistency of content

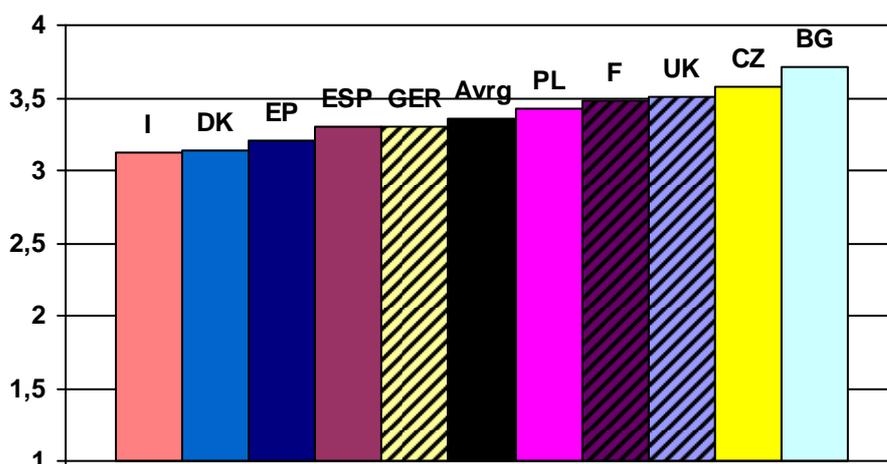


Figure 10: National means for consistency of activities

National means for consistency of contents (see Figure 9) and learning activities (see Figure 10) are very similar for all national learning groups.

2.3 CONCLUSIONS

The ratings on challenge reveals that learners feel demanded but not overtaxed. Differences between national learning groups are considerable and should be observed in future trainings to avoid undue differences.

The learning time estimated by the learners correlates to the challenge they rate. However, this learning time is considerably lower than the estimated time. Since it is unclear whether learners included all time used to fulfil tasks this part of evaluation needs improvement. It is important to get reliable data on learning time in order to award the right amount of ECTS points.

Results for consistency of contents and activities with learning objectives are encouraging. All results are in a positive range. Unfortunately, content and

activity of the only unit all learners have in common and that is related to the European dimension of the course (Net-Training in Europe) is rated relatively low.

The concept of the evaluation of units should be revised because most learners got tired by answering the same questions after each unit. The result is a database that is quite weak and not really usable for national comparisons. However, such comparisons could be very fruitful to learn from each other in providing attractive contents and activities.

3 EVALUATION AT THE LEVEL OF MODULES

Evaluation at the level of modules was intended to deliver information mainly to the appropriateness of content and tutorial support. Results for the first three modules were already reported during the Toulouse meeting to give providers an opportunity make changes during the pilot training.

Like in the evaluation on the level of units learners' readiness to fill in the questionnaire decreased throughout the training. Therefore, data of several national providers for later modules could not be included in the analysis. Moreover, there were no data from the German provider for the first module.

3.1 EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

In the Net-Trainers training thematically related units build a module. The whole training consists of five modules.

Module 1	First steps in net-training
Module 2	Concepts and challenges of net-training
Module 3	Tutoring net-learners
Module 4	Designing net-learning materials
Module 5	Developing a net-training project

Table 4: Titles of Modules

At the end of each module learners were asked to answer 13 questions regarding the just finished module on a rating scale with (1) not at all, (2) somewhat, (3) quite and (4) absolutely.

Number	Question
Learners' Expectations	
1	Did the module meet your expectations?
Size of the module	
2	Do you feel more learning units would be useful for reaching the overall learning objective of the module?
3	On the other hand, do you think there should be fewer, less detailed learning units?
Contents	
4	Did you feel interested in the contents of the learning units of the module?
5	Do you think the learning contents are appropriate to the overall learning objective of the module?
6	Did you have the feeling of learning many new things?
Tutorial support and group processes	

7	Have you been satisfied with the support from the tutors?
8	Did the tutor facilitate exchange and discussion amongst the learners of your group?
9	Did the tutor facilitate exchange and discussion amongst yours and other learning groups?
10	Did the content and activities of learning units stimulate discussion and exchange amongst the participants?
Use of media	
11	Do you think the media selected to deliver the learning unit was appropriate to the content and learning objectives?
European dimension	
12	Did you feel you were participating in a European training?

Table 5: List of module related questions

3.2 RESULTS

3.2.1 LEARNERS' EXPECTATIONS

Learners always have expectations about content, method and other training related aspects when they engage in a learning process. These expectations are shaped by the learners' previous knowledge and learning experience but also by the information learners received in advance about the training. The more relevant this information is the more realistic expectations are about the training. If expectations are not met this may cause discontent and may lead to dropping out from the training.

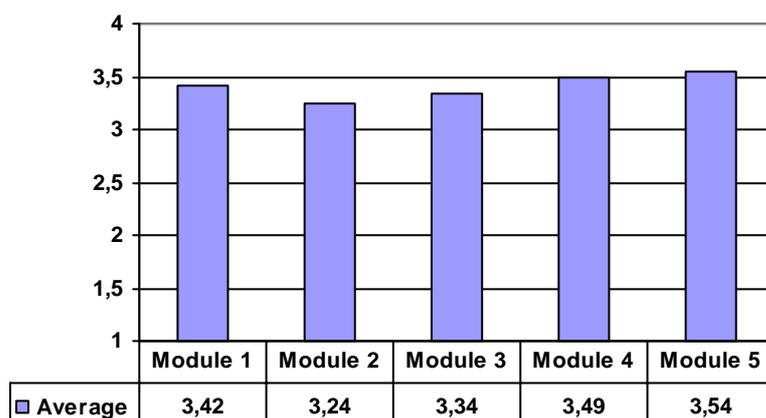


Figure 11: Rating for match with learners' expectations

The training meets learners' expectations quite well. Ratings are always in a positive range of above 3 and slightly increase from module 2 to module 5.

National means (cf. Table 6) reveal some differences in the mean ratings among national providers¹. Highest ratings are realised from French (3,79 for module 1

¹ Some ratings could not be included due to missing or too few data (less than 4)

and 3,5 for module 2), Polish (3,5 for module 2; 3,92 for module 4) and Bulgarian (3,6 for module 3; 3,83 for module 5) learners. Lowest ratings come from Denmark (3,0 for module 1; 2,67 for module 2) and Italy (2,88 for module 3; 2,98 for module 4; 2,98 for module 5).

	Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Module 4	Module 5
Average	3,42	3,24	3,34	3,49	3,54
Bulgaria	3,54	3,47	3,6	3,67	3,83
Czech	3,33	3,29	3,57	3,46	3,67
Germany	no data	3,2	3	less than 3	no data
Spain	3,08	3	3,5	3,5	3,8
France	3,79	3,5	3,45	3,64	3,55
Poland	3,5	3,5	3,33	3,92	3,77
Denmark	3	2,67	less than 3	less than 3	less than 3
Italy	3,44	3,08	2,88	2,95	2,95
UK	3,47	3,32	3,5	3,65	3,5
Europath			3,38		

Table 6: National means for rating for match with learners' expectations

Europath learners in module 3 are giving a positive rating of 3.38 too.

3.2.2 SIZE OF MODULES

In times of “learning on demand” and “learning just in time” learners often prefer very small scale and short term learning episodes. Such “learning nuggets” on the other hand are not suitable for the acquisition of a complex set of interrelated knowledge, skills and attitudes. The Net-Trainers Training with an average of 160 learning hours and 35 learning units is an extensive course.

Learners rated whether they would prefer to have more (question 2) or less (question 3) learning units.

Means around 1,5 for both ratings show very clearly that learners in general do not feel that it would be useful to have more or less learning units within this training. Only for the biggest module 3 (twelve learning units) the rating is slightly higher (1.94) indicating that more learners think this module should contain less units.

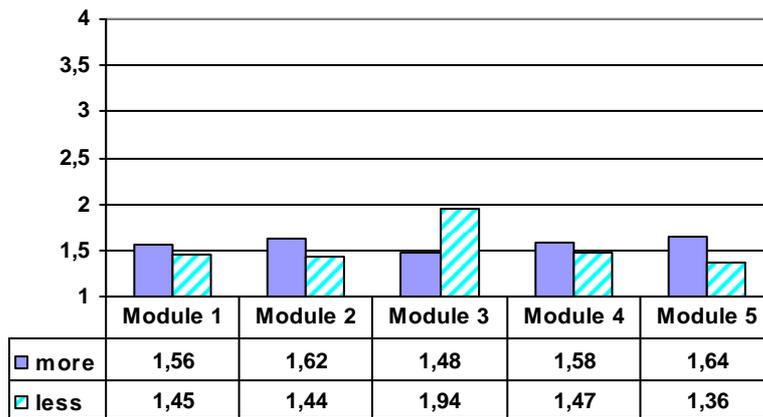


Figure 12: Ratings of size of the training

A national comparison shows that especially Bulgarian learners would welcome more units ($x = 2,53$) and Italian learners would welcome less units ($x = 1,78$) especially in module 3 ($x = 2,63$).

3.2.3 CONTENT

The five modules of the trainings focus on different contents and learning objectives. Learning objectives and contents are derived from the Net-Trainers job profile that is part of the training framework. Asking learners whether they are interested in the contents of a module is informative regarding their attitude towards the job profile (question 4).

Even if learners accept certain learning objectives it may be that contents are not suitable to achieve these objectives. Question 5 is intended to indicate the fit between objectives and contents.

Important to sustain motivation for learning is the learners' feeling that he or she learns not only important but also new things (question 6).

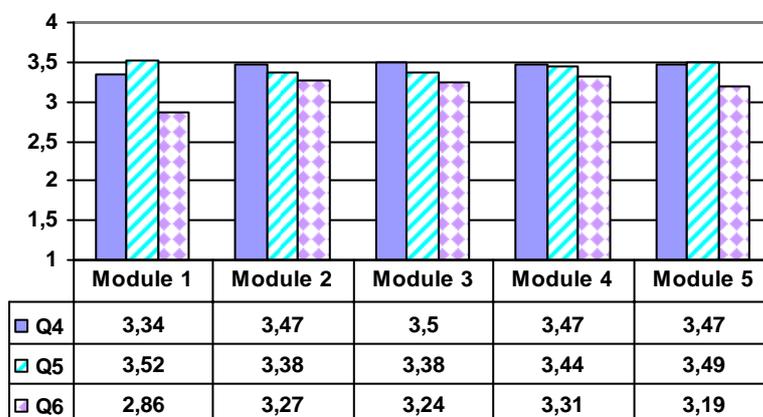


Figure 13: Content related ratings

Learners rate content all over the training as being very interesting ($x = 3,47$). Only for the first introductory module this rating is slightly lower. Considering that within this module only preparatory activities take place and only short and introductory contents are used this rating is acceptable. Highest ratings come from learners from Bulgaria ($x = 3,73$) lowest from Danish ($3,05$) learners.

In general, learners evaluate contents as very appropriate with view to the learning objectives ($x = 3,44$). There are no significant differences between modules. Again Bulgarian learners display highest ratings and Danish learners lowest ($x = 2,95$).

In general learners do also confirm that they have learned many new things. As a matter of course, the rating for module 1 is lower ($x = 2,86$) because there are no real learning contents in this module. Ratings are very similar for modules 2, 3 and 4 and again slightly lower for module 5. The reason may be that the focus in this final module is not new content but work on the learners' own project. Again learners from Bulgaria display highest ratings ($x = 3,51$) and learners from Denmark lowest ($2,67$).

Nevertheless, contents change quite quickly and up-to-dateness of contents should be followed up carefully.

3.2.4 TUTORIAL SUPPORT AND GROUP PROCESSES

Tutorial support and social learning are key features of the Net-Trainers Training. In question 7 learners are asked whether they are satisfied with support from their tutors. One of the tutors task is to stimulate and facilitate social learning within learning groups and among learning groups. Questions 8 and 9 are intended to evaluate learners' satisfaction with these aspects. Social exchange and discussion among learners can also be stimulated by content and activities. Question 10 asks learners to rate content and activities in this respect.

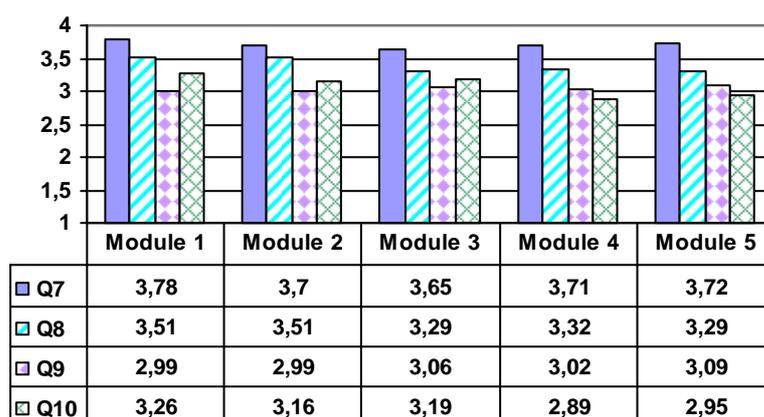


Figure 14: Ratings of satisfaction with tutorial support

Throughout all modules learners are very satisfied with tutorial support. The ratings are clearly above 3,5. For several modules tutors of national providers received the maximum rating 4 from all learners (UK: modules 1, 2 and 4; Czech Rep.: modules 3 and 4; Germany: module 2).

Learners are also satisfied with tutors' efforts to facilitate exchange and discussion within the learning group. These efforts seem to be stronger in the first modules slightly decrease in the last modules. Bulgarian and German tutors receive the maximum rating 4 in module 2.

Lower but still positive are learners' ratings regarding the tutors' efforts to facilitate exchange and discussion beyond the own learning group with other national or international learning groups. Ratings are around 3,0. Best ratings come from Bulgaria.

In general, learning contents and activities stimulate exchange and discussion among learners. However, ratings are around 3,0 and can be improved. If materials and activities are revised improvements in this aspect should be considered.

3.2.5 USE OF MEDIA

Media are of major importance in online learning because it's the way learning content is delivered. Different digital formats from more traditional media like electronic script to more complex multimedia like electronic lecture or web based training up to very up-to-date media like podcasts are available to transport learning content. The decision in favour of a specific format depends on various aspects: learners' preferences and habits, suitability, availability, and last but not least costs. In any case, the use of media should be appropriate to the learning content (question 11).

In the Net-Trainers training it's up to the national provides to decide on formats for learning content. The most usual format is HTML text and electronic script (PDF).

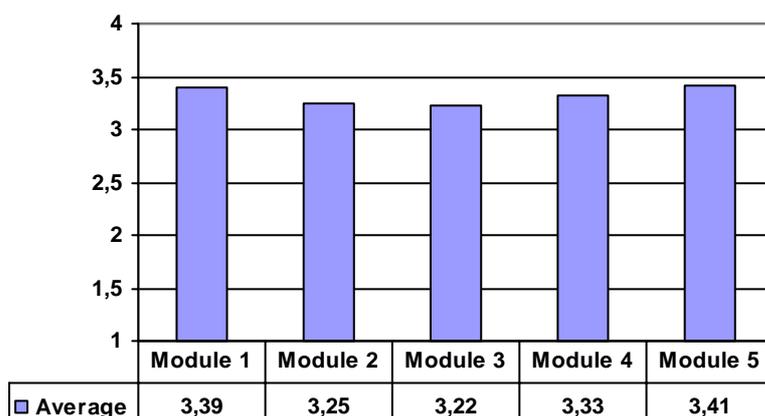


Figure 15: Ratings of media use

Ratings around 3,3 prove learners' evaluation that media used in this training are appropriate to learning content and activities. Ratings are slightly lower for modules 2 and 3. Highest ratings come from Bulgarian learners ($x = 3,73$) and lowest from Italian learners ($x = 3,09$).

3.2.6 EUROPEAN DIMENSION

Like tutorial support and social learning the European dimension is a key concept of this training. Learners experience the European dimension in several ways: the European forum, a learning unit on e-learning in Europe in module 2 and the Europath in module 3.

Question 12 is intended to uncover if learners are aware of this European dimension of the training.

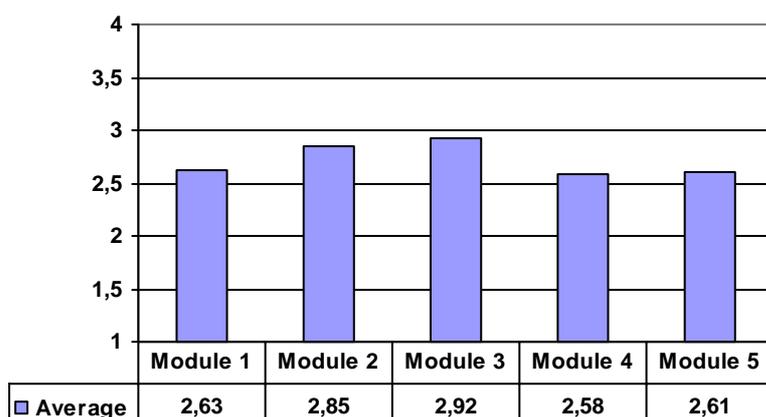


Figure 16: Ratings on European dimension

Learners ratings on the European dimension are in a middle range around 2,8. Ratings are higher for modules 2 and 3. There are considerable national differences in the perception of a European dimension. In Bulgaria, Germany and UK the perception of the European dimension is quite high, especially in module 3. Probably, one reason is that learners from these countries are very active on the Europath. For learners from Italy and France being part of a European training is less obvious. As a matter of course, learners on the Europath in module 3 rate the European dimension quite high ($x = 3,63$).

In general, this rating is not satisfying and calls for additional efforts to make the European dimension more evident.

3.3 CONCLUSION

The evaluation of modules reveals that learners' expectations are met quite well and that learners are also quite satisfied with the workload of the training. Contents, learning activities and media use are rated positive.

A highlight and strength of the training is the tutorial support of learners. This is an important and encouraging result because intensive tutorial support is not only one of the key principles in this training. Experiencing the benefits of intensive tutoring is also a prerequisite for future development of high quality online trainings by Net-Trainers.

Results on another key principle are less satisfying: the European dimension. Learners realise that they are part of a European training, especially in module 2 and 3. However, participating in a European training and benefits from it should be more obvious.

4 EVALUATION AT COURSE LEVEL

4.1 EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

At the end of the whole Net-Trainers course learners received an electronic questionnaire by their course provider and were asked to fill in the questionnaire and return it to their provider.

The electronic questionnaire included 32 questions with a 4-point scale from “1 = not at all” to “4 = absolutely” and an opportunity to add free text comments and testimonials at the end. The questions with rating scales covered the following aspects of the course:

- content
- individual activities
- group activities
- European dimension
- method (portfolio, contract method)
- support by tutors
- training website
- general evaluation

Question No.	Question	N
	Content	
1	The contents are straightforward to understand.	112
2	The contents are motivational.	112
3	The contents are relevant in my professional context.	112
4	The contents are well structured.	112
	Individual activities	
5	The individual activities have helped me to achieve the learning objective of the units.	112
6	The individual learning activities are too demanding.	112
7	The individual learning activities are too numerous.	112
	Group activities	
8	The group activities facilitate the learning process.	112
9	I have learned a lot from the group activities.	112
10	The group activities limit my flexibility in time too much.	112
	European Dimension	
11	Did you feel you were participating in a European training?	112
12	Did you participate in the European Forum?	111
13	Participating in the European Forum was interesting.	60

14	I enjoyed communicating with participants from different countries.	68
15	I would have liked more discussions in the European Forum.	69
16	Did you participate in the Europath?	103
17	The European Learning Path allowed for an insight into different learning cultures.	33
18	It has been interesting and enriching to learn and discuss with participants and tutors from a different country.	37
Method (Portfolio, Contract Learning)		
19	The portfolio has been helpful in giving me an overview of my learning progress and my achievement.	82
20	The method of contract learning supports self-guided learning well.	112
21	My individual time management has been improved by defining the individual learning path.	109
22	The self assessment questionnaires were helpful in planning each module.	108
Support by Tutors		
23	I have been well supported by the tutors.	112
24	The technical support has been helpful.	107
25	The learning group has been a place of good communication and collaboration.	112
Training Website		
26	The training website is user friendly.	111
27	It is easy to navigate on the training website.	111
28	Was the connection to the platform reliable?	108
29	Have you had technical problems with the Forum tool?	102
30	Have you had technical problems with the Chat tool?	98
General Evaluation		
31	How would you finally assess the course?	112
32	Would you recommend the Net-Trainers course to a colleague?	111

Figure 17: Questions of the electronic questionnaire on course evaluation

4.2 EVALUATION RESULTS

Only two learners from Denmark filled in the questionnaire. Because this is too less for statistical analyses their ratings are not included in the following analyses.

4.2.1 RESULTS ON CONTENT

The Training Framework that underlies all national Net-Trainers trainings gives national providers the freedom to use different contents and different media

(electronic text, hypertext, and video). Even if contents are different, ratings should be at a comparably positive level.

Ratings for all four content related questions are quite positive (see Figure 18). The most positive rating is given for “Understandability” (Question 1, $x = 3,58$). National means vary between $x = 2,96$ (Italy) and $x = 3,85$ (Poland).

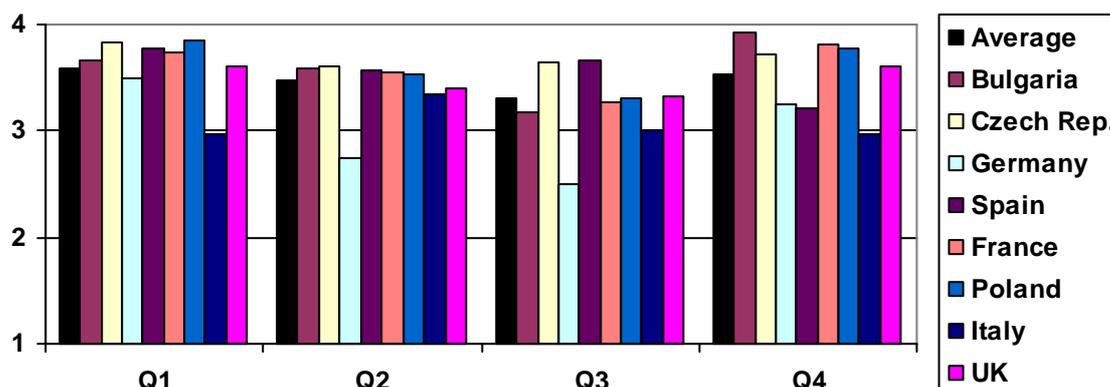


Figure 18: Means for content related questions on course evaluation

Also very positive is the learners' rating for “Motivation” given by the contents ($x = 3,47$). The lowest national mean is given by the German learners ($x = 2,75$) and the highest by the Czech learners ($x = 3,6$).

“Relevance for the professional context” is rated somewhat lower but still quite positive ($x = 3,3$) with national means between $x = 2,5$ (Germany) and $x = 3,67$ (Spain).

Learners have also a very positive attitude towards the “How challenging did you find this unit?”

About the Unit you have just completed:

Q1: Do you think the instructional contents are consistent with the learning objectives of the unit ?

Q2: Do you think the learning activities are consistent with the learning objectives of the unit ?

Q3: How long did it take you to complete this unit? (content background reading, communication and activity)” of the contents ($x = 3,53$) with national means between $x = 2,96$ (Italy) and $x = 3,92$ (Bulgaria).

4.2.2 RESULTS ON INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP ACTIVITIES

Recent learning theories and instructional approaches value meaningful and demanding learning activities as being crucial for successful learning. For this training it is important to know if learners feel that they gain a benefit from activities or if in contrary they feel overloaded.

Individual Learning Activities

The learners' clearly positive rating for individual learning activities in questions 5 ($x = 3,57$) is very important. The variation in results from $x = 3,17$ (Italy) and $x = 3,85$ (Poland) is not very high.

Results from question 6 reveal that in general learners do not rate individual activities as too demanding ($x = 2,1$). Especially French learners do not feel over challenged ($x = 1,55$) in contrast to Italian learners that feel more demanded ($x = 2,65$).

Another aspect of overload is a too high number of activities. Also this kind of overload is not confirmed by the learners ($x = 1,9$). Again, French learners indicate the lowest value ($x = 1,25$) and Italian learners the highest ($x = 2,39$) rating.

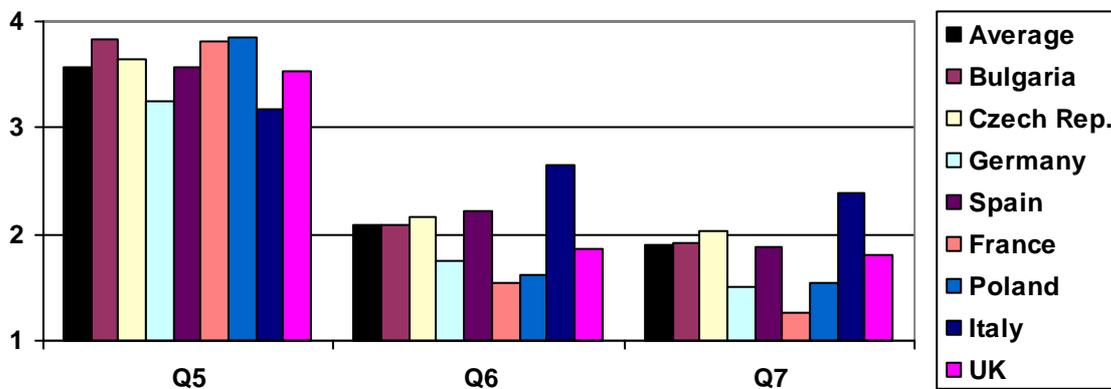


Figure 19: Means for individual activities

Group Learning Activities

Collaborative learning is one of the key principles of the Net-Trainers training. Group activities enable learners to benefit from different perspectives within the group and emphasize the social aspect of learning. Again the question is if learners feel a benefit from these activities. On the other hand group activities might be regarded as limiting flexibility of learning too much.

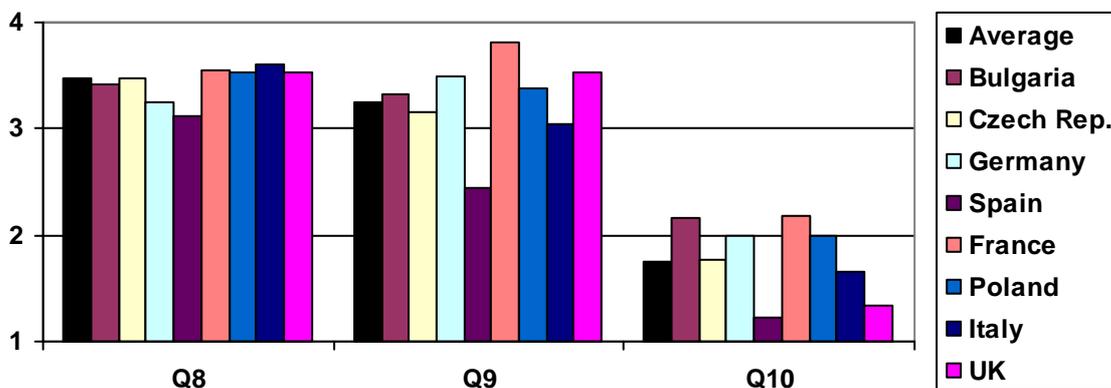


Figure 20: Means for group activities

The Results derived from question 8 reveal that learners are very satisfied with the group activities in this course. There is a strong feeling that group activities facilitate the learning process ($x = 3.48$). Ratings in different national courses are quite similar. The lowest rating from Spain ($x = 3.11$) is quite close to highest from Italy ($x = 3.61$).

Also a good rating exists for the question 9 (I have learned a lot from the group activities) with $x = 3,25$. Again the lowest rating comes from Spain ($x = 2,44$), the highest rating this time from France ($x = 3,82$).

In general, learners do not feel that that group activities limit their flexibility in learning too much ($x = 1,76$). Especially, Spanish learners do not feel inflexible ($x = 1.22$). French learners experience limitation to flexibility a bit more ($x = 2.18$).

4.2.3 RESULTS ON THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF THE COURSE

A unique selling point of the Net-Trainers training is its European dimension. Learners do not only participate in a train-the-online-trainer course they are provided with several opportunities to experience online learning in a European context. The question here is if learners welcome this opportunity if they benefit from the European dimension and if there are obstacles to make proper use of the European dimension.

European Forum and Europath

Two aspects of the European dimension allowed for active participation: the European Forum and the Europath.

The European Forum is a discussion forum in English language that is open to all participants of the Net-Trainers course. At the beginning of the training learners are encouraged to introduce themselves to other learners with a short statement in the forum. Throughout the training participation in the European forum is constantly encouraged by common discussion topics.

Nearly half of the learners (46%) indicate in question 12 that they participated in the European Forum. The most active participants came from Germany (100%), Czech Republic (80%) and UK (64%). Least activity came from Bulgaria (17%), Italy (17%) and Poland (23%). However, it is not clear whether these results are very reliable because question 12 is not absolutely unambiguous. "Did you participate in the European Forum?" might refer to active as well as passive participation. For the next evaluation this question has to be revised in a way to make it unambiguous.

The name "Europath" is used to name the opportunity for learners to change the national learning group during module 3. However, the opportunity to take module 3 with one of the old providers (UK, France, or Germany) had to be limited because running the course and tutoring learners was not part of the grant and old providers decided to host learners from new providers without

reimbursement. So, 18 learners (17% of the responding learners) changed into another national learning group.

Perception of the European Dimension

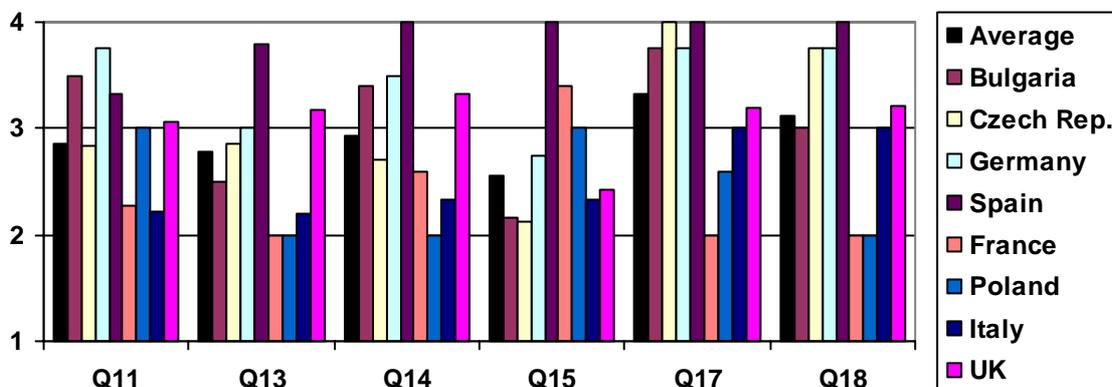


Figure 21: Means for questions on the European dimension

There is a moderately positive statement of learners if they are asked whether they felt to participate in a European training (question 11, $x = 2.85$). However, differences between national providers are considerable German ($x = 3.75$), Bulgarian ($x = 3.5$), Spanish ($x = 3.33$) and British ($x = 3.07$) learners answer this question with a positive tendency whereas learners from Italy ($x = 2.22$) and France ($x = 2.27$) have a negative tendency. Learners who participated in the European Forum ($x = 2.98$) or in the Europath display a clearly more positive rating ($x = 3.5$).

Participation in the European Forum is rated moderately positive (question 13, $x = 2.78$) with the best ratings from Spain ($x = 3.8$), UK (3.18) and Germany (3.0). Moderately negative ratings come from France ($x = 2.0$), Poland ($x = 2.0$) and Italy ($x = 2.2$). Again ratings are better for active participants in the European Forum ($x = 2.98$) and Europath ($x = 2.93$).

Learners enjoyed communication with participants from different countries (question 14, $x = 2.96$). This is especially true for learners from Spain ($x = 4.0$), Germany ($x = 3.5$), Bulgaria ($x = 3.4$) and UK ($x = 3.33$). Polish ($x = 2.0$) and Italian ($x = 2.33$) learners are less satisfied. Those learners who actively participated in the European Forum ($x = 3.17$) or in the Europath ($x = 3.44$) have a clearly more positive attitude.

Learners' attitude towards the question whether they would have liked more discussions in the European Forum is ambiguous (question 15, $x = 2.55$). Nearly half of the learners want more discussions. As a matter of course especially those learners would like to have more discussions that rated discussions in the European Forum as interesting (correlation with question 13: $r = .22$, $p < .05$) and enjoyed communicating with learners from other countries (correlation with question 14: $r = .24$, $p < .05$).

Learners appreciate the Europath as a good way to get an insight into different learning cultures (question 17, $x = 3,33$) even if they did not participate in it. Those 18 learners who took the Europath confirm this clearly ($x = 3,78$).

Learners do also appreciate the opportunity to learn and discuss with participants and tutors from different countries (question 18, $x = 3,11$), especially those who took the Europath ($x = 3,72$).

4.2.4 RESULTS ON METHOD (PORTFOLIO, CONTRACT LEARNING)

In the Net-Trainers training two special methods are employed: (a) The portfolio method is used as an assessment method that is especially suitable for adult learners who achieve complex skills. (b) Contract learning enables a way of learning that is adjusted to the individual possibilities and needs of learners.

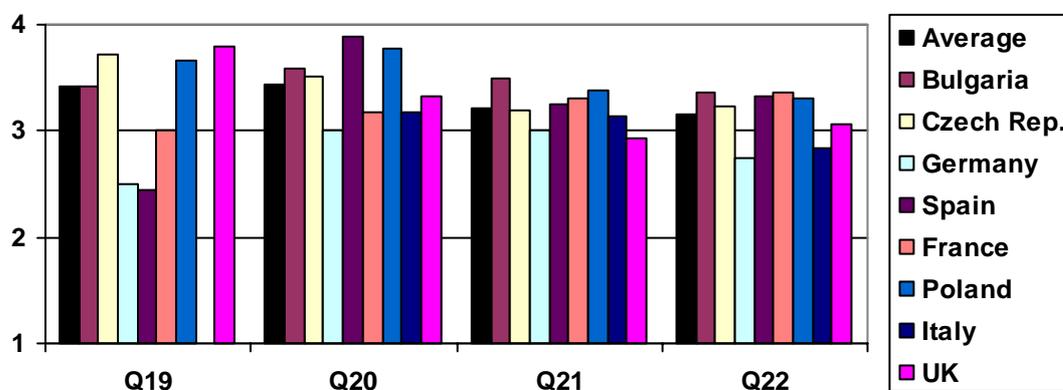


Figure 22: Means for questions in method

In general learners regard the portfolio method as a good way to keep track of one's own learning progress and achievements (question 19, $x = 3,41$). However, learners from Spain ($x = 2,44$) and Germany ($x = 2,5$) are more inconsistent in their ratings. (Learners from Italy did not respond to this question).

Most learners rate contract learning as a good or very good way to support self-guided learning (question 20, $x = 3,44$) and they agree that individual time management is improved by this method (question 21, $x = 3,21$). An important part in contract learning is the self assessment of knowledge and skills. The questionnaire used for self assessment in this training is rated positively (question 22, $x = 3,15$).

4.2.5 RESULTS ON TUTORIAL SUPPORT

Another key principle of the Net-Trainers training is the intense tutorial support for learners and learning groups. Tutorial support is not only an important means to ensure learning success; tutorial support should also provide models of good practice for the learners.

A big success for the providers of this training and their tutors is the very positive rating of the learners for tutorial support (question 23, $x = 3,81$). 15% agree and 83% very much agree to the statement that they were very well supported by their tutor. Only two from 112 learners were not satisfied with

their tutor. It is also important to note that this very positive rating is true for all providers with only minimal differences (see Figure 23).

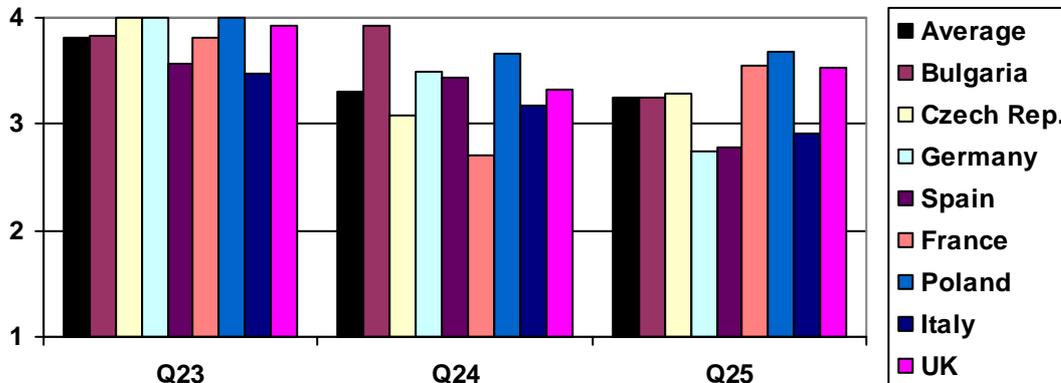


Figure 23: Results for tutorial support

Tutorial support relates mainly to support for content, learning activities and learning organisation. Another domain of support is technical support. Also this kind of support is rated positively (question 24, x = 3,3). Another positive rating is given for the communicative and collaborative quality of the learning groups (question 25, x = 3,25).

4.2.6 RESULTS ON TRAINING WEBSITE

Online learning depends very much on the reliability and usability of online devices used to disseminate learning contents and communication devices used to connect learners with their tutors as well as learners among each other. Due to technical problems (compatibility with Cyrillic letters) the provider from Bulgaria had to switch to another platform (moodle) at the beginning of the training ratings from this provider are related to a different platform.

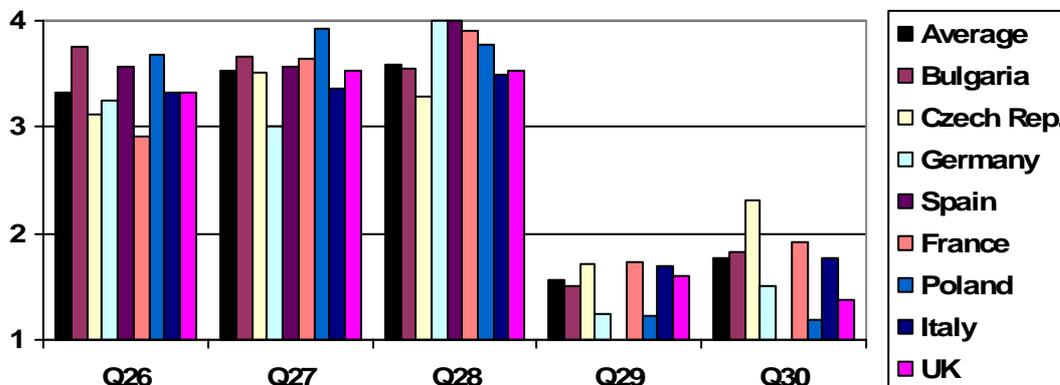


Figure 24: Results for Training Website

The training website is rated as user friendly (Q26, $x = 3,33$). Best ratings come from learners from Bulgaria ($x = 3,75$), Poland ($x = 3,69$) and Spain ($x = 3,56$). Less positive ratings come from French learners ($x = 2,91$).

Even better ratings learners assign to orientation on the training website. (Q27, $x = 3,53$). Ratings from different national providers are quite similar, best ratings come from Polish learners ($x = 3,92$).

Connectivity of the learning platform was very good (Q 28, $x = 3,58$).

Learners did not experience many problems with the forum tool. As a consequence ratings are quite low (Q 29, $x = 1,57$). Slightly more problems caused the chat tool, the rating is a bit higher (Q 30, $x = 1,77$). Obviously, especially learners from Czech Republic experienced some problems ($x = 2,32$).

4.2.7 OVERALL EVALUATION

At the end of the questionnaire learners were asked to give an overall evaluation of the course by answering on two questions:

(a) How would you finally assess the course?

(b) Would you recommend the Net-Trainers course to a colleague?

The learners responded to this questions on a scale with ratings from 1 = negative to 4 = positive.

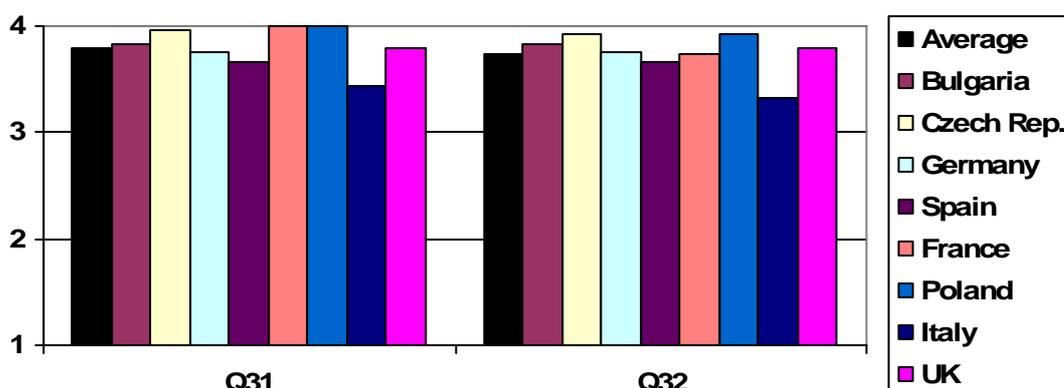


Figure 25: Results for overall evaluation of the course

Results for the overall course evaluation are very good and encouraging. Learners assess the course positive (Q 31, $x = 3,79$). Out of a total of 114 learners 94 (82,5%) learners assess the course with the best rating 4, 16 learners with the rating 3. Only 4 (3,5%) learners seem to be not satisfied and rate the course with 2. Nobody rated the course with the worst possible mark 1.

Nearly all learners would recommend the course to a colleague (Q 32, $x = 3,73$). 106 learners (93,8%) choose the positive rating 4 or 3 and 7 learners (6,2%) choose a negative rating of 1 or 2.

4.2.8 CORRELATION RESULTS

Using the Spearman method correlation coefficients that indicate the strength of relations between items can be calculated. Most interesting for future dissemination of the training is to look at correlations between the overall

evaluation (question 31 and 32) and all other aspects of the trainings rated by the learners. Correlation between the two overall ratings (Q31: final assessment; Q32: recommend to a colleague) are very high and significant ($r = .80$, $p < .001$). The most distinctive correlations come from question 31. Correlations with this question will be reported here.

Question No.	Question	Spearman Corr. Coeff. with Question 31
	Content	
1	The contents are straightforward to understand.	.40, $p < .001$
2	The contents are motivational.	.46, $p < .001$
3	The contents are relevant in my professional context.	.33, $p < .001$
4	The contents are well structured.	.55, $p < .001$
	Individual activities	
5	The individual activities have helped me to achieve the learning objective of the units.	.43, $p < .001$
6	The individual learning activities are too demanding.	-.31, $p < .001$
7	The individual learning activities are too numerous.	$-.28, p < .01$
	Group activities	
8	The group activities facilitate the learning process.	$.19, p < .05$
9	I have learned a lot from the group activities.	.38, $p < .001$
10	The group activities limit my flexibility in time too much.	$-.03, n.s.$
	European Dimension	
11	Did you feel you were participating in a European training?	.31, $p < .001$
12	Did you participate in the European Forum?	$.09, n.s.$
13	Participating in the European Forum was interesting.	$.09, n.s.$
14	I enjoyed communicating with participants from different countries.	$.18, n.s.$
15	I would have liked more discussions in the European Forum.	$-.06, n.s.$
16	Did you participate in the Europath?	$.15, n.s.$
17	The European Learning Path allowed for an insight into different learning cultures.	$.31, p < .05$

18	It has been interesting and enriching to learn and discuss with participants and tutors from a different country.	.17, n.s.
Method (Portfolio, Contract Learning)		
19	The portfolio has been helpful in giving me an overview of my learning progress and my achievement.	.29, $p < .01$
20	The method of contract learning supports self-guided learning well.	.29, $p < .01$
21	My individual time management has been improved by defining the individual learning path.	.33, $p < .001$
22	The self assessment questionnaires were helpful in planning each module.	.38, $p < .001$
Support by Tutors		
23	I have been well supported by the tutors.	.48, $p < .001$
24	The technical support has been helpful.	.20, $p < .05$
25	The learning group has been a place of good communication and collaboration.	.42, $p < .001$
Training Website		
26	The training website is user friendly.	.18, $p < .05$
27	It is easy to navigate on the training website.	.35, $p < .001$
28	Was the connection to the platform reliable?	.20, $p < .05$
29	Have you had technical problems with the Forum tool?	.04, n.s.
30	Have you had technical problems with the Chat tool?	.06, n.s.
General Evaluation		
31	How would you finally assess the course?	-
32	Would you recommend the Net-Trainers course to a colleague?	.80, $p < .001$

Table 7: Spearman Correlation Coefficients between overall evaluation and other ratings (highly significant results printed bold)

The strongest correlation with overall evaluation of the course exists for the “structuredness” of the course ($r = .55$). All other content related ratings are also

significantly high. Obviously, satisfaction with content of the course is most important for a good overall evaluation of the course.

Another very important aspect for a good overall rating is tutorial support ($r = .48$) and communication and collaboration in the learning group ($r = .42$).

All aspects of the method are correlated to the overall evaluation of the course. Improvement of time management and self assessment questionnaires are more closely related to a good overall rating than other aspects of method.

Some aspects of individual and group activities do also significantly correlate with overall evaluation.

Regarding the European dimension only one aspect (the general feeling of participating in a European training) correlates with overall evaluation. It seems that the European dimension is appreciated if learners experience it. But it is not a critical aspect of the training.

Technical aspects are only partly correlated with a good overall evaluation. Only, user friendliness in navigation shows a relevant significant correlation.

4.3 CONCLUSIONS

Because providers are free to decide on content that is appropriate to the training framework differences in content related ratings are likely. However, the rating of content is very positive and homogeneous. Some ratings for German and Italian contents should be looked after.

Like for the content national providers are free to choose learning activities that are appropriate to help learners to achieve the compulsory learning objectives in the common training framework. It is important to note that individual and group activities even if they are different for different providers are rated very positively by the learners. This is true for individual as well as group activities.

Learners can take the European Net-Trainers course as a train-the-online-trainer course without being actively involved in the European Dimension. About one half of the learners, however, feel that they are involved in a European course and participate more or less actively in the European Dimension. For these learners the European aspect is an important "added value" of the Net-Trainers course. The more active learners are in the European Forum or on the Europath the more positively they rate the experience of sharing the course with other Europeans. For the future development of this course it will be important to extend the European Dimension as a unique selling point of this course.

The majority of learners clearly appreciate the use of portfolios and contract learning as methods that support flexible learning. This is a strong indication to continue and improve using these methods.

It is very important that the ratings for the overall quality of the course are similarly good for all national providers. No matter, in which national group learners take the course they are very satisfied and ready to recommend the

course to others. This is an important and sound base for the continuation and further dissemination of the course.

5 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS FROM THE EVALUATION OF THE PILOT TRAINING

The pilot training can be regarded as very successful in all language versions. As the correlation analysis described in chapter 4.2.8 reveals content and tutorial support are the factors that are most directly linked to a high overall rating of the course by learners.

Measures at all levels prove a high satisfaction of learners with the contents of the course. Contents are rated as 'well structured', 'important', 'interesting', 'stimulating' and 'consistent with learning objectives'. There are certain but not critical differences among the national providers. The same is true for learning activities. Learners feel that they benefit from active learning, both individual and group based. This result confirms the approach in the Net-Trainers project to standardise the training framework but not the national contents.

Another most important aspect of the training is the tutorial support. Also this aspect is rated very high by learners all over the different language versions. This result encourages close contacts and intensive exchange among the tutors of the different language versions in order to maintain a high level of tutoring quality.

Two aspects of the training need careful observation: the European dimension and maintaining an equal workload in all language versions.

Results from the analysis on the level of units suggest that there are differences in the workload among different national versions. This has to be verified. If such differences really exist – and are not due to unclear questioning – steps have to be taken to minimize these differences in order to justify the awarding of equal ECTS points.

It is also recommended to take further efforts to make the benefits of the European dimension of this course more obvious to learners of all national courses. Weak language skills are the main reason not to engage in European activities in this course. Ways should be found to provide learners from all national courses with a tangible benefit from the European dimension in this course. This could be a valuable contribution of this course to the idea of European integration.