

1 Evaluation report

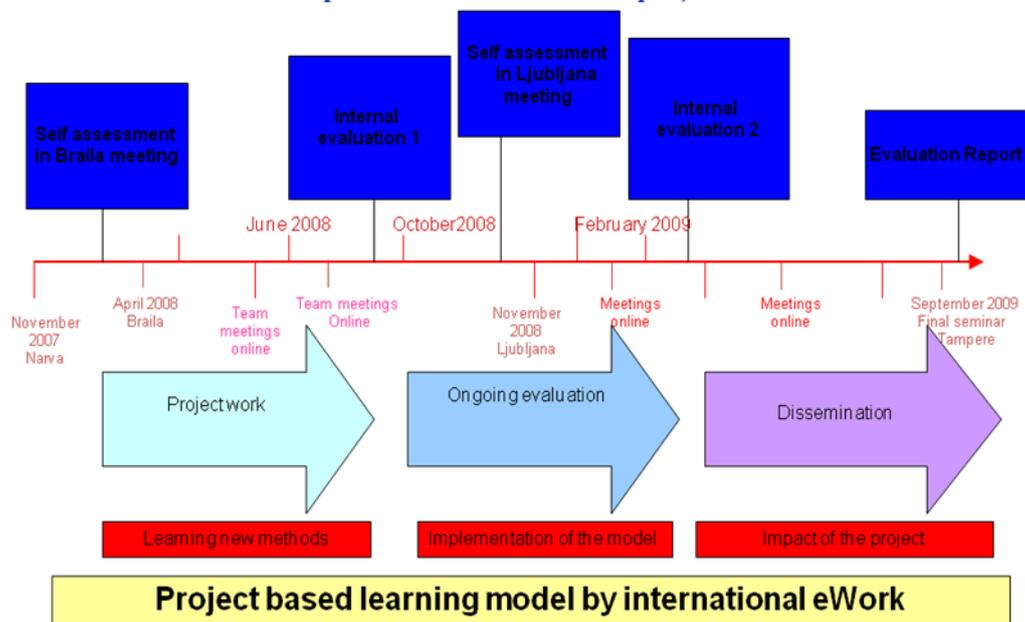
Project based Learning Model by International eWork Second round

21.9.2009

Esedu

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Evaluation process in relation to the project activities



29.11.2009

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1.1 Evaluation process

The South-Savo Vocational College (Esedu), Mikkeli, Finland coordinated the work package Evaluation in the PLIME project. The evaluation results were documented and reported by the evaluators Pirkko Hatara and Teija Pylkkänen who were responsible both for planning the evaluation process and the carrying out the evaluation.

In the self assessment plan (appendix 1) for the PLIME project it was stated that four rounds of data collection will be organised: self assessment in two project meetings and two rounds of internal evaluation. In the first partner meeting in Narva, a workshop of the aims and goals of the evaluation was organised. On the basis of this workshop results, the evaluation process (appendix 2) was introduced in the second meeting in Braila.

1.2 The first round of internal evaluation

The first round of internal evaluation took place after the completion of the work package 2 in the third partner meeting in Ljubljana on 10-12 November 2008. The period covered by this evaluation round is November 2007 to October 2008. The project specific instrument developed in the frame of the first round evaluation was used as the means through which data was collected from the partners. This instrument aims at capturing partners understanding and progress of the work undertaken in terms of the type of work activities completed, the partners' work in progress, problems partners encountered in completing the work activities, possible obstacles faced in addressing the work plan in relation to the project's objectives and time schedule.

The second part of the instrument aims to drive the partnership to reflectively review the project and its activities and focuses on a) partners' assessment /reassessment of the operational objectives and milestones of the project, b) definition of project innovativeness, and possible changes needed in order to reach the successful project completion.

The instrument's third part aims at capturing the partnership's views in terms of the manner by which the project and its components are being coordinated and concerns partner satisfaction on the information provided and the means by which it is provided; the degree to which the coordinating institution and the rest of the partnership addressed issues of coordination; the effectiveness of the communication channels chosen, and the degree of satisfaction on the relation of time investment in the project to the allocated budget. The appendix 3 shows the questions stated and the answers from the four teams (AVC team, auto team, ele team and meca team) in the first round of evaluation.

In addition to this evaluation instrument to get the view from the partnership, feedback was collected from the learners. Student feedback focuses on understanding the learning tasks, ways of completing the tasks, level of international cooperation and learning outcomes (eg. skills improvement, time requirements, learning expectations) comprising the following questions:

- (1) Are the instructions of the learning tasks clear?
- (2) What kind of support and guidance you would need from your teacher?
- (3) Have you been in contact with other students/teams abroad? If not, why was it so?
- (4) What have you learned while completing the task?

Learners were asked to bring into the discussions their own experiences and relate them to their former knowledge and reflect on that in an international context.

Instead of sending the questionnaire to each individual teacher who worked for the PLIME project to fill in it was decided to run through the assessment during the partner meeting while working in the teams. The coordinator sent a set of preparatory questions before the meeting. A few partners had filled in the questionnaire and it was decided that the evaluation instrument created by the evaluators functioned as an official evaluation tool. Separate individual reports were collected by the evaluator and they were analyzed simultaneously with the team answers to ensure the anonymity. The coordinator included short team reports in the meeting programme and therefore the reports are collected with team names in the table in the appendix 3.

The reporting also takes into account impressions formed during project partner interactions (face-to-face meetings and workshops, levels of response to project requirements and completion of tasks). These interactions are rather difficult to be recorded as evidence but overall these form the bases for the manner by which the project has been carried out.

1.3 The second round of internal evaluation

The second evaluation round of summative nature was planned for the autumn 2009. As the final seminar was decided to be organised in September instead of the planned November, it was decided to run through the second round earlier in the end of the spring term. The reported survey was realized by using the Surveyshare tool in April and May 2009 (Activated March 31st and expired on May 20th).

The internal evaluation activity was planned together with the coordinator and it was decided to use the Surveyshare to collect the data. The reports will be shared with the whole partnership in Sharepoint where they will be discussed. Any deficiencies identified in the assessment will be discussed and appropriate correction actions will be established.

The partnership agreed on the indicators that will be used to measure the progress of the project in the meeting in Ljubljana (November 10 – 12 in 2008). When planning the survey statements and questions both quantitative (the number of example projects created and the number of teachers and students participating the transnational eWork) and qualitative indicators (feedback from the teachers and students and the results of self-evaluation process, e.g. skills learned/improved) were taken into account.

It was highlighted in the Ljubljana meeting by the evaluators how important it is to have feedback from the target groups in the project. It was agreed on that the teachers in each teams will motivate and encourage students to give their feedback.

The evaluators also kept in mind the following recommendations they gave after the collected feedback in the first evaluation round:

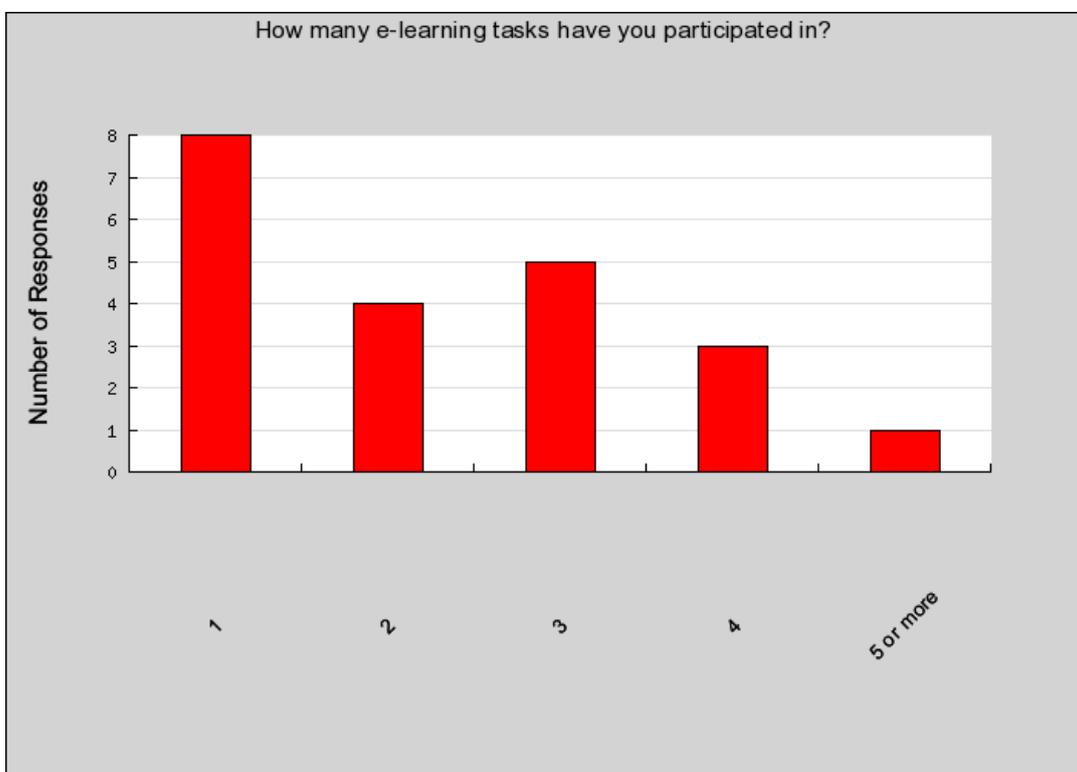
- Teams need to learn different online tools (skype or messenger) in order to organise regular virtual meetings in the second half of the project.
- The usability and appropriateness of the tasks in relations to the curricula in different countries has to be assessed and considered.
- Skills and knowledge needed from the target groups to complete the tasks in different countries has to be defined.

1.4 Results: Student feedback

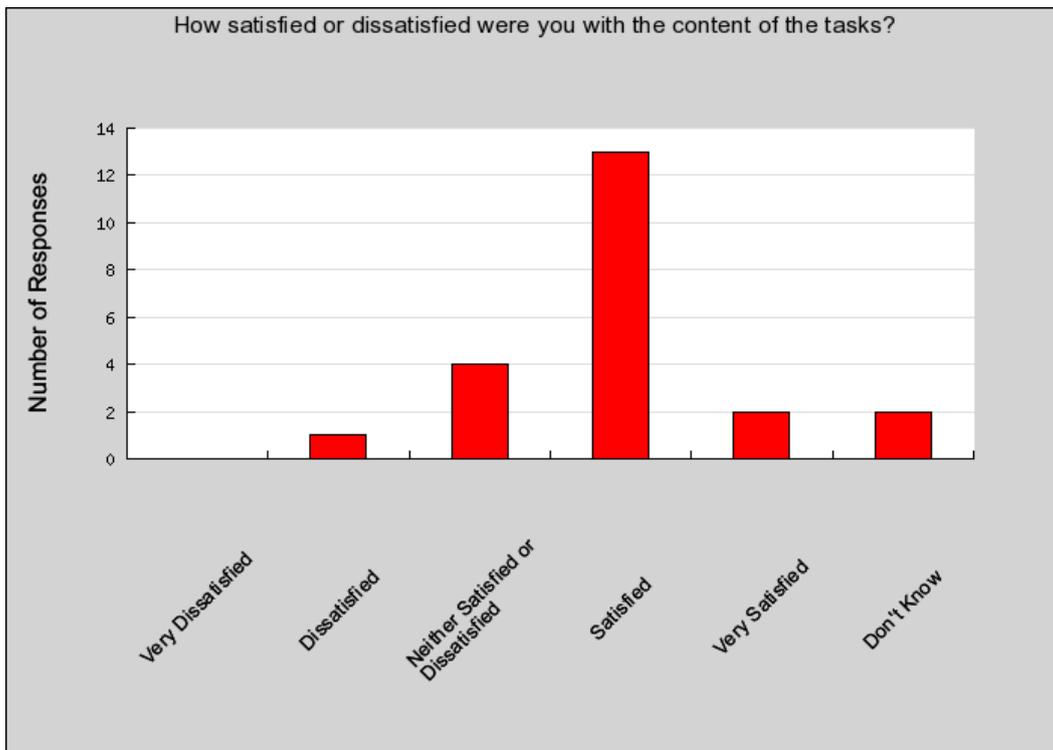
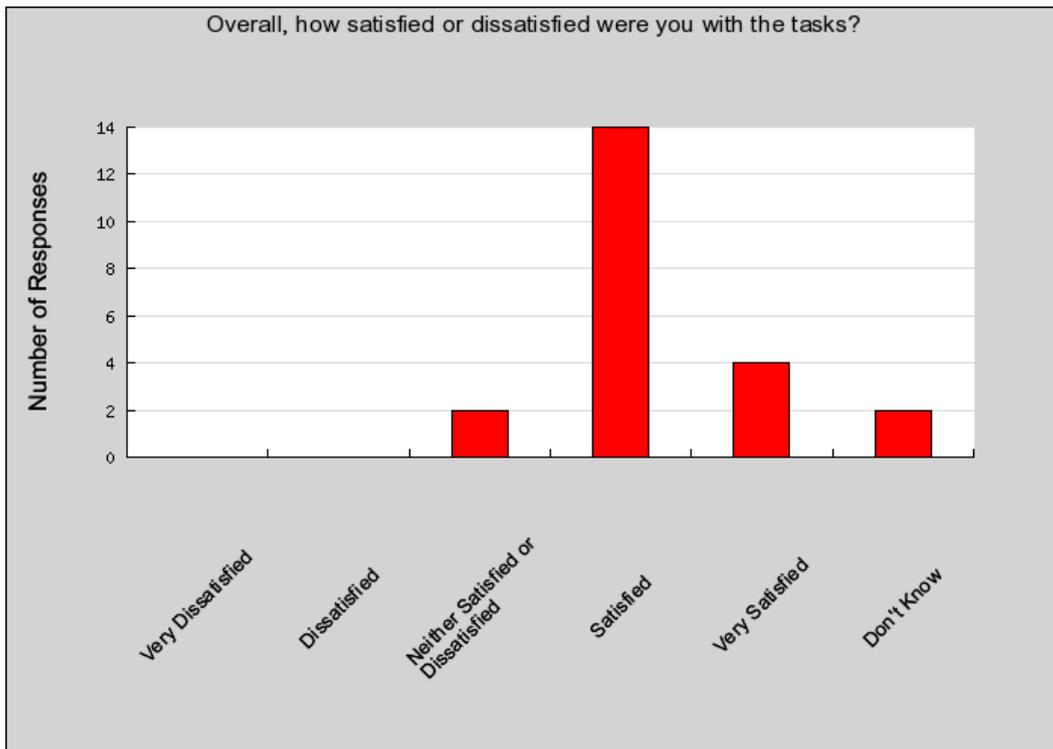
22 students answered the survey. The potential amount of the students taking part in the activities of the project is 115. However, a great number of students left the school after the first project year and it may be the case that the email addresses were not valid any more. Often the teachers also named as PLIME students the whole classroom even if only a few of the students participated in the piloting of the PLIME

project. Taken into account these factors the e-Work tasks involved only about half of all the potential students, i.e. 50-55 students. Given to this, the amount of 22 is valid to show the tendence among the students. The different teams were not evenly represented, though. Most of the students were from AVC team (9). 6 of the students were from ELE team, 4 from MECA and 2 from AUTO. It may also be the case that answers are given by a group of students which seemed to be the case in the first round of the student feedback. 20 of the respondents were male and two female. Most of the students were 18-21 years old (16), four of them were 15-18 years and the rest (2) 21-26 years old. Most of the students (12) reported that they have access to the piloted eWorks and courses both from their home computer and the school computer. 5 reported the use of the home computer only and 5 the school computer only.

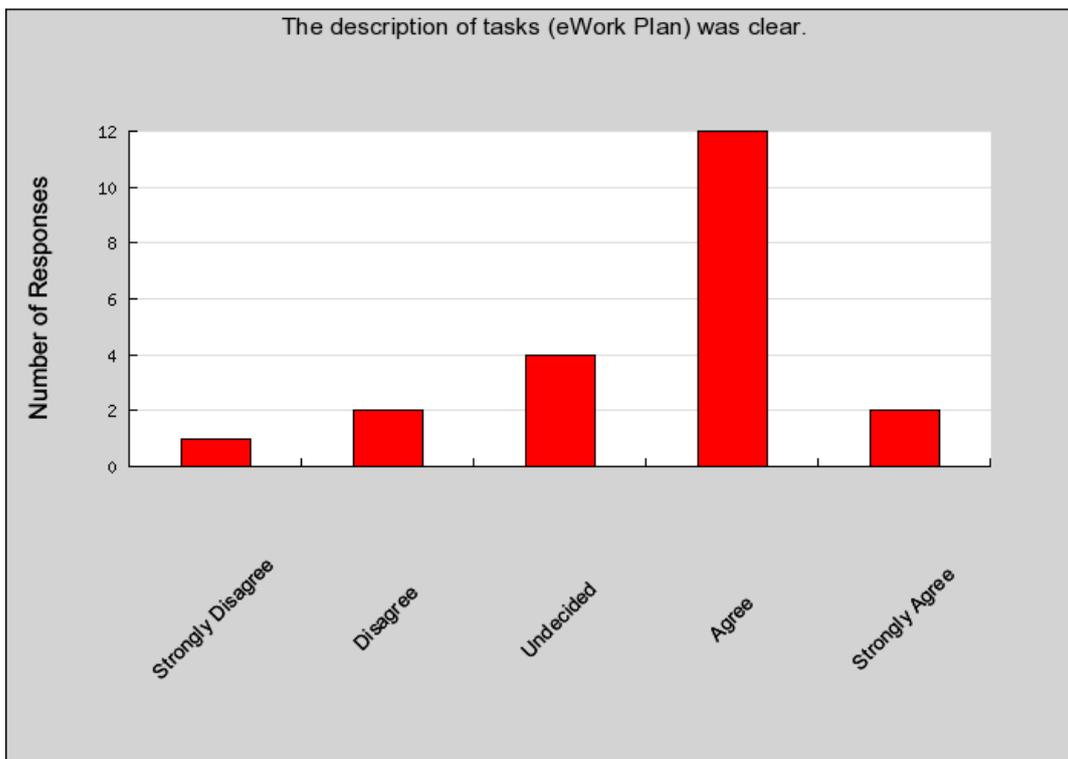
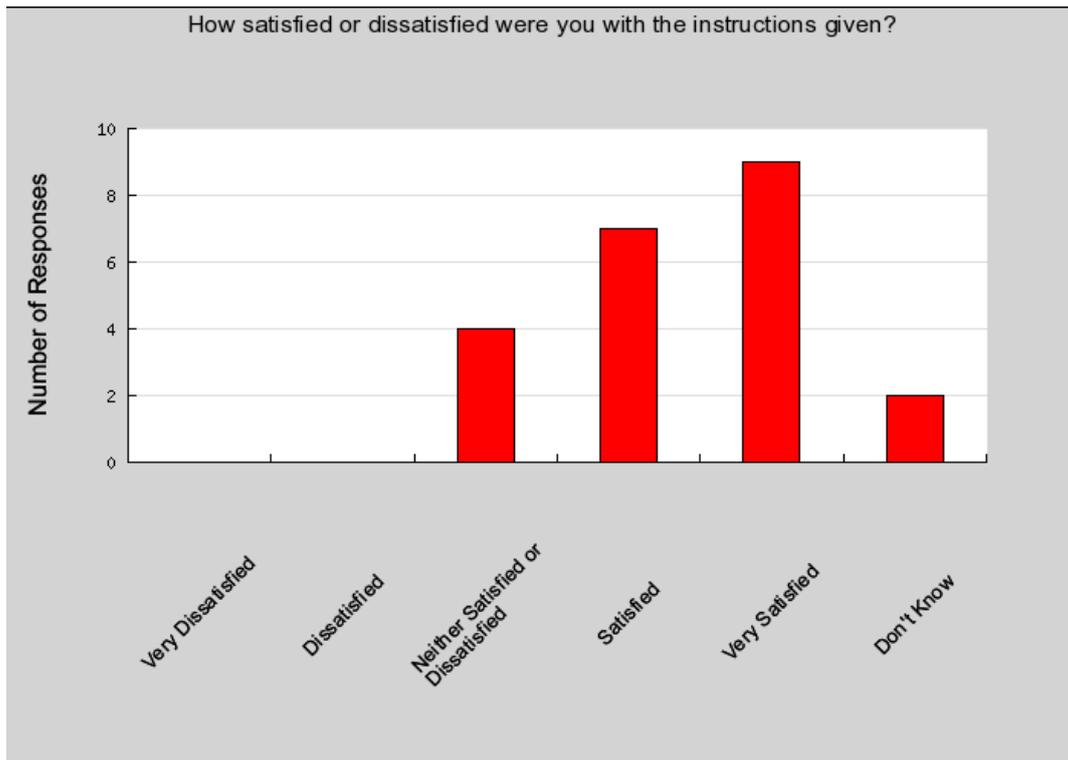
It was agreed that all e-Work project tasks (2 from each school/ team) must be done, tested and commented by the end of May 2009. At this stage of the number of the students who had participated more than two eWork tasks was only 8. Over 50 % of the respondents (12) had tested only one or two tasks. One respondent had skipped the question.



The graphics below show that students were satisfied with the tasks and the content of the tasks.



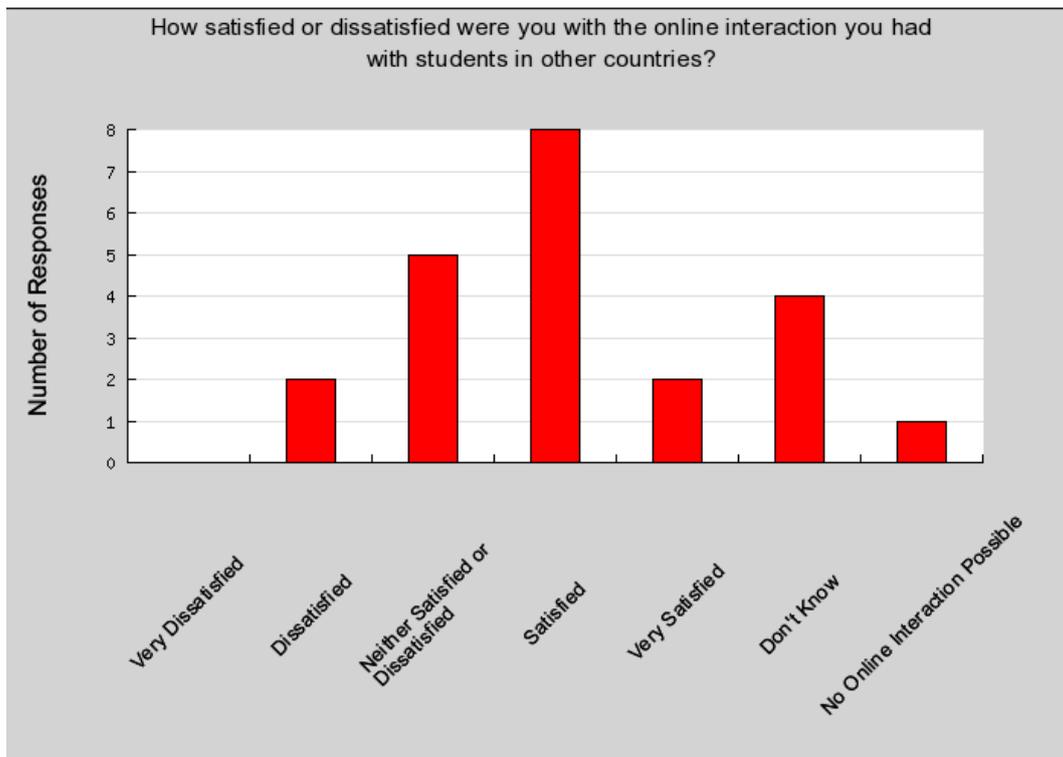
Students reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied (17/22) with the instructions they got from their teachers. 16 out of 22 reported that they got help from the instructor or teacher when needed (8 agree, 8 strong agree). Only two disagreed. The majority of the respondents think that the instructions and descriptions in the eWork tasks are clear. However, 6-7 students are not so satisfied.



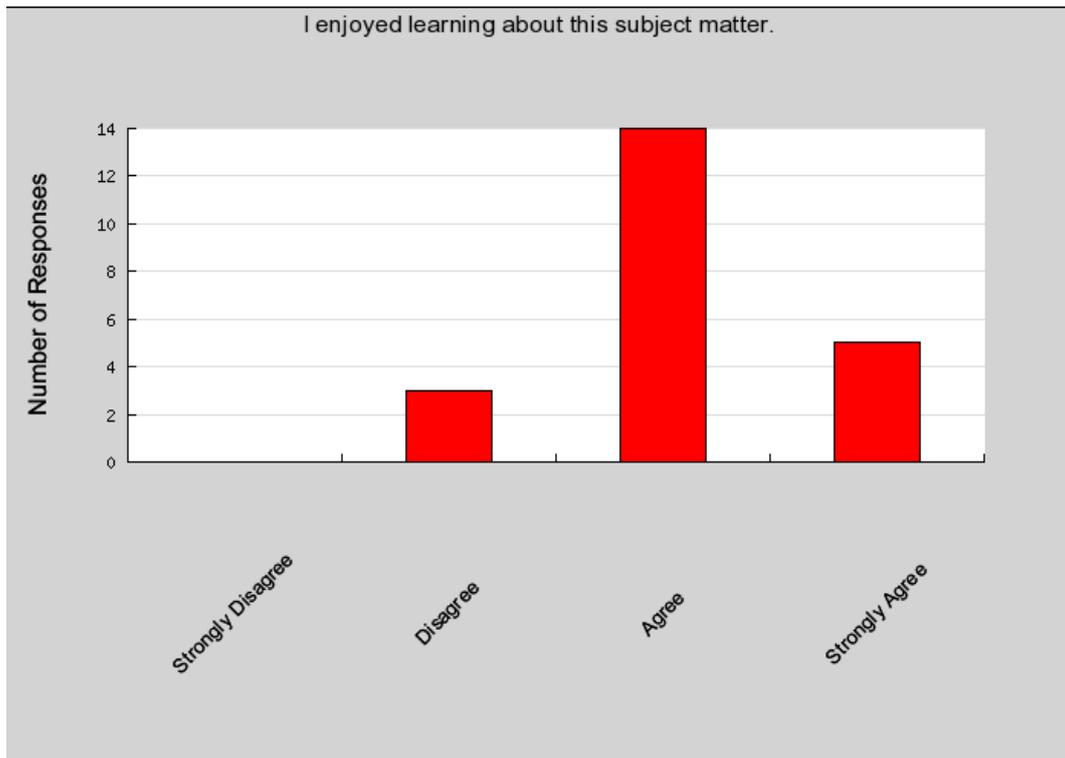
These numbers correlate the number of students who found it more difficult to complete the tasks (7/21). 14 of the students found it easy to complete the tasks. One of the respondents skipped these questions.

Technical challenges did not play a great role for the students when working in the Sharepoint. 6 said they were satisfied with the navigation in the Sharepoint. 5 said to be dissatisfied and 8 neither dissatisfied or satisfied. The students did not find the download time so crucial while working. 15 out of 22 said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the downloading.

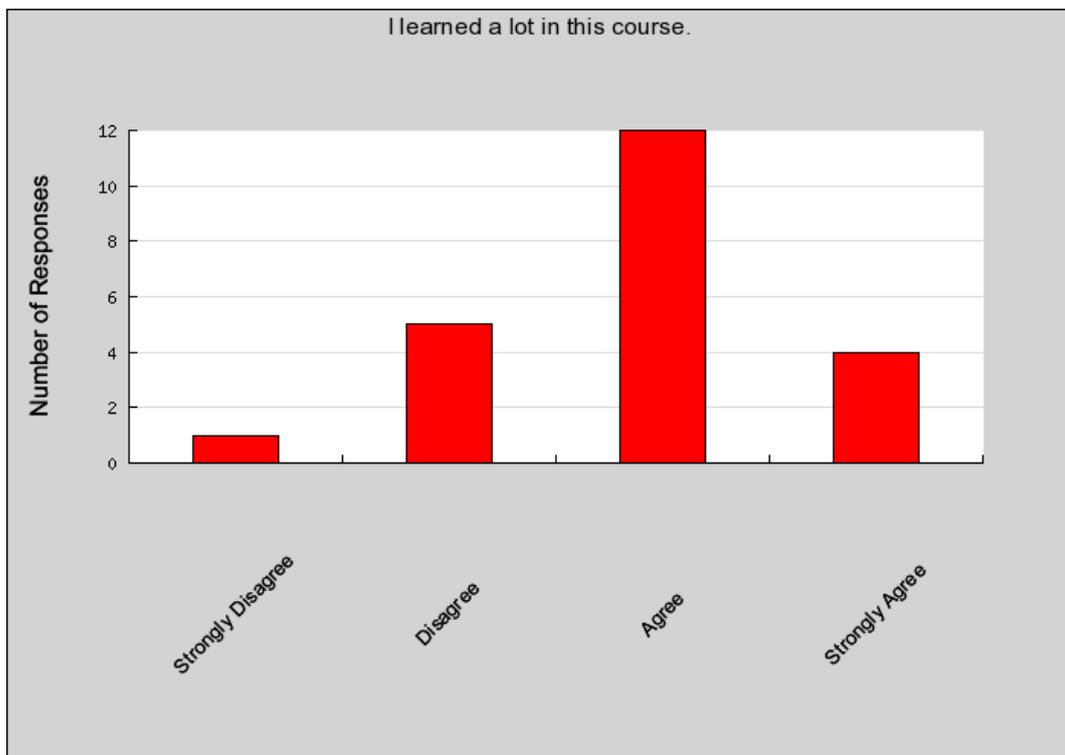
Students are very interested in the international cooperation and communication. Online communication was not possible for all (graphic below) but those who had online meetings were happy with the new opportunities. Students' comments like "It's the most amazing chance I've ever had to work with abroad countries", "participating in an international team – it's the best way to learn new things about life and people and skills" and "you can learn other students from other countries" support the responses where most of the students commented that they had learned to communicate more effectively (agree 12, strongly agree 4). 6 respondents reported in the opposite way and it correlates the number of the students who were dissatisfied with the online interaction.



The same number of more negative responses can also be seen in the summary questions. When answering the question "Do you find this kind of international problem based e-learning a good way to learn professional skills?" 13 students answer "yes", 3 "no" and 6 "don't know". However, 19 reported that they had enjoyed learning about this subject matter (agree or strong agree) and only 3 reported disagree.



16 reported that they had learned a lot in this course. There were again 6 persons who reported that they had not learned so much.



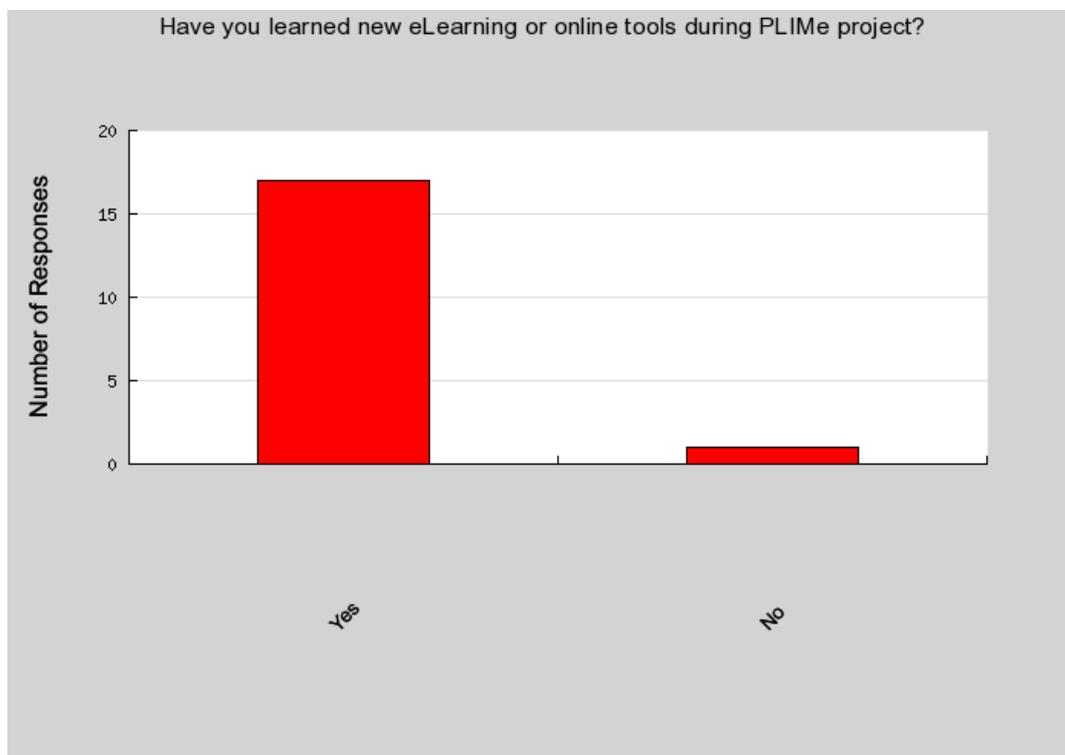
In open questions, many commented that they find this kind of learning interesting and motivating: “I think that it’s a very good idea because we students can communicate, learn and work with other students from other countries”, “I think it’s a good way to work and learn”, “I think that projects like this improve its participants both socially and practically”. One respondent commented that he would have liked more freedom for his own ideas.

1.5 Results: Teacher feedback

The survey was sent to 55 persons. From this amount should be extracted the project coordinators and those teachers who did not take part in the implementation of the e-Work tasks which leaves the potential amount of teachers 30-45. 18 teachers answering the survey: 2 from AUTO team, 3 from AVC, 8 from ELE, 5 from MECA. Half of them (9) reported that they have experience on combining eLearning with traditional classroom teaching, the other half (9) did not have experience prior to the project. Five persons reported that they have experience 3 years or more.

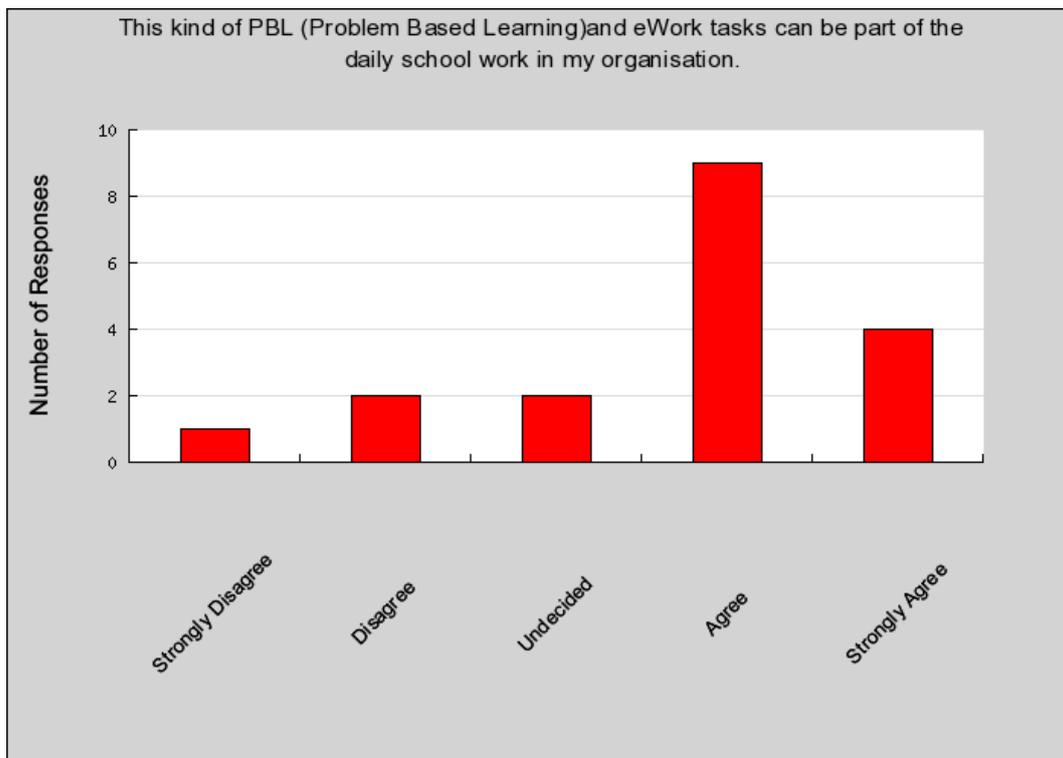
The teachers were asked questions where they assessed the skills and motivation of their students, the level of the tasks versus the knowledge of their students and the amount of guidance their students got. Most of the teachers (14) found the level of the tasks moderate, 2 found them easy and 2 difficult. 14 thought their students were motivated, 4 thought they were not very motivated. 16 thought that their students were given all the technical support they needed to complete the tasks.

11 teachers were satisfied with the technical capabilities of Sharepoint but 6 reported to be either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Almost all of the respondents reported that they have learned new eLearning or online tools during the project. Only one had the opposite opinion (graphic below).



When answering the question on the international cooperation in the teams, half reported it to be working well and half answered either “disagree” or “undecided”.

Most of the teachers report that these kind of eWork tasks could be part of the school work in their schools.



12 teachers think that it would be moderate or easy to adapt eLearning with the curriculum in their own school. 4 say it's difficult and one says it's not possible. When answering the resources dedicated to eLearning half (9) say the level of resources is appropriate and half says the opposite. 17 out of 18 would be willing to continue with the similar methods in the future.

1.6 Conclusions

The above evidences suggest that all partners were quite active in the project. However, the students of different teams were not evenly represented in the survey. Most of the students reported that they have access to the piloted eWorks and courses both from their home computer and the school computer. Thus students were willing to use also their home computers and their time outside school days to complete their learning tasks. This shows that PLIMe PBL (Project Based Learning) could function as a possible model for distance learning.

Over 50 % of the students (12/22) had tested only one or two PLIMe learning tasks. This shows that half of the students were not very motivated with the learning tasks because they completed only the minimum amount of the tasks available. This forms a challenge for the teachers - they should encourage students not only at the beginning but also during the PBL process. In the PLIMe project one reason for the low motivation was that a great number of students left the school after the first project year and were replaced by new students in the middle of the project period. When implementing the PBL processes in the schools in the future, they should be kept short enough to maintain the motivation (a few weeks or a couple of months instead of two years as it was the case in the PLIMe project). On the other hand it was seen in the teacher's responds that 14/18 of the teachers thought their students were motivated, and only 4 of them thought they were not very motivated.

The students were satisfied or very satisfied (17/22) with the instructions they got from their teachers. The majority of them thought that the instructions and descriptions in the eWork tasks are clear. It can be stated that the eWork task descriptions were successfully formulated by the teachers in the PLIMe project. Almost all the teachers thought that their students were given all the technical support they needed to complete the tasks. However, there were 6-7 students who were not so satisfied. Teachers should keep in mind that there are always individuals who need more support and guiding.

The 2/3 of the students found it easy to complete the PLIMe tasks and the 1/3 of them found them quite difficult. Most of the teachers (14/18) found the level of the tasks moderate, 2 found them easy and 2 difficult. Thus the PLIMe learning tasks seem in general to be challenging enough for the students, or some of the tasks could be even more difficult. It would be good to design learning tasks to meet different levels (easy, moderate, difficult) to make sure that all students can complete some of them but the learners that are more advanced can find enough challenge.

Sharepoint was used as a communication and interaction tool during the PLIMe project by teachers and students. It worked also as an eLearning platform. It was found out that technical challenges did not play a great role for the students when working with the Sharepoint. 6 said they were satisfied with the navigation in the Sharepoint. 5 said to be dissatisfied and 8 neither dissatisfied or satisfied. The students did not find the download time so crucial while working. Also 11/18 teachers were satisfied with the technical capabilities of Sharepoint but 6 reported to be either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Sharepoint seems to be suitable for international group work for PBL.

International online communication was not possible for all. Those who had online meetings were happy with the new opportunities. An example of the student comments: "participating in an international team – it's the best way to learn new things about life and people and skills". Unfortunately, chances for communication between the students in some teams were few. This is quite understandable since there are countries involved that are not used to use the software yet. Yet, teachers play an important role here - they should be more active in finding new ways of communication, eg. Skype meetings and offer more support in order to help the learning process. In the PLIMe PBL model the possibility for international cooperation is important and has added value as can be seen in following comment from a student: "I think that it's a very good idea because we students can communicate, learn and work with other students from other countries".

The majorities of the students enjoyed learning about this subject matter (agrees or strong agree). Good feedback is that in general students had pleasant learning experiences. 16/22 reported that they had learned a lot in this course. But there were again 6 persons who reported that they had not learned so much. Different levels of learning tasks (easy, moderate, difficult) would help the situation.

Half (9) of the teachers reported that they have experience on combining eLearning with traditional classroom teaching, the other half (9) did not have experience prior to the project. Five persons reported that they have experience 3 years or more. Like in the PLIMe project, the level of knowledge on eLearning issues varies a lot in European countries. There are lots of teachers who have no experience with eLearning methods yet. Almost all of the teachers reported that they have learned new eLearning or online tools during the project. Only one had the opposite opinion. It can also be clearly stated that the partners through the implementation of the piloting have increased their understanding into the requirements for eLearning. The PLIMe model offers an easy way to include an international aspect in the daily school work.

When answering the question on the international cooperation in the teams, half of the teachers reported it to be working well and the half answered either "disagree" or "undecided". The teachers comment that the reasons for the lack of communication were very common: lack of common time with partners, different

schedules and differences in curricula and programs. Most of the teachers reported that these kinds of eWork tasks could be part of the school work in their schools. 17 out of 18 would be willing to continue with the similar methods in the future, it tells about the success of the PLIMe project, as it can be seen in the following teacher comment: "It was rather exciting work for our students. They had a chance to communicate with students in other countries using the best way it could be done (completing the same task). They also get the experience working in e-learning environment. The teachers combined e-learning technology with traditional methods, and this allowed us end up with a number of advantages."

2 Appendixes

2.1 1 Self Assessment Plan for the project

2.1.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of the internal project evaluation is to collect and document evidence regarding the process of the project development, and the process of project product development, under the scope of the stated objectives.

Through this plan it is intended to identify strengths and weaknesses of the project processes and outcomes as well as improvement opportunities. The implementation of this plan aims at the provision of support and guidance to the partnership members in order to maintain motivation of the achievement of the project goals.

2.1.2 SCOPE

This assessment plan addresses the objectives and measures that have been established for the PLIME project. The plan considers the following self-assessment framework criteria:

- Leadership
- Commitment and involvement
- Development and management
- Result focus
- Target group focus
- Compliance with regulations and contracts

The plan foresees a set of core assessment tools and methods that are to be administered and analysed periodically.

2.1.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

The coordinating organisation (PKKY) has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Self assessment plan will be implemented during the project. The responsibility for conducting self assessment has been delegated to the partner organisation Esedu. All partners are to be the informants of the evidences that will be analysed and reflected upon.

2.1.4 DEVELOPMENT WORK

The evaluation is an integral part of the project workplan. The following methods will be considered in the self assessment process:

- Selection of appropriate tools and methods for the project
- Collection of data and monitoring
- Analysis of the data, reflection of results
- Conclusions and suggestions for improvements of the project and project implementation in general

Questions relating to planning and preparatory work:

- What is the goal and width of the assessment?
- On which processes will the focus be on?
- Standards of the assessment (usability, ethics, preciseness)?
- How will the results of the assessment be used internally and externally?

At the completion of the process answers such as the ones stated below will be responded to:

- Are the aims realistic and real?
- Which mechanisms support and which hinder the work?
- Does the work of different parties support the goals?
- How should it be? (the difference between the reality and the goals)

Questions relating to collecting data:

- Who/What will be assessed? (individuals, partner organisations, teams, etc.)
- How to bring to light different perspectives in order to maintain and increase motivation?
- Which tools will be used?
- Benefits of the assessment process to each party?
- Ethical problems

Questions relating to analysis:

- Which tools are available? (quantitative vs. qualitative)
- How to present the data and the results?
- Who will the results be presented to? Who makes conclusions and suggestions?
- Scalability potential of both project outcomes and evaluation results

Questions relating to analysis:

- How will the results be dealt with? Which forum and who?
- How will the process be carried out (tools)?
- How will the suggestions for improvement be taken into account?
- How to ensure learning from process?

2.1.5 Time Schedule

There will be four rounds of data collection: Self assessment in two project meetings and two rounds of internal evaluation, first of formative nature in the summer 2008, the second of summative nature in the autumn 2009.

2.1.6 Reporting Procedure

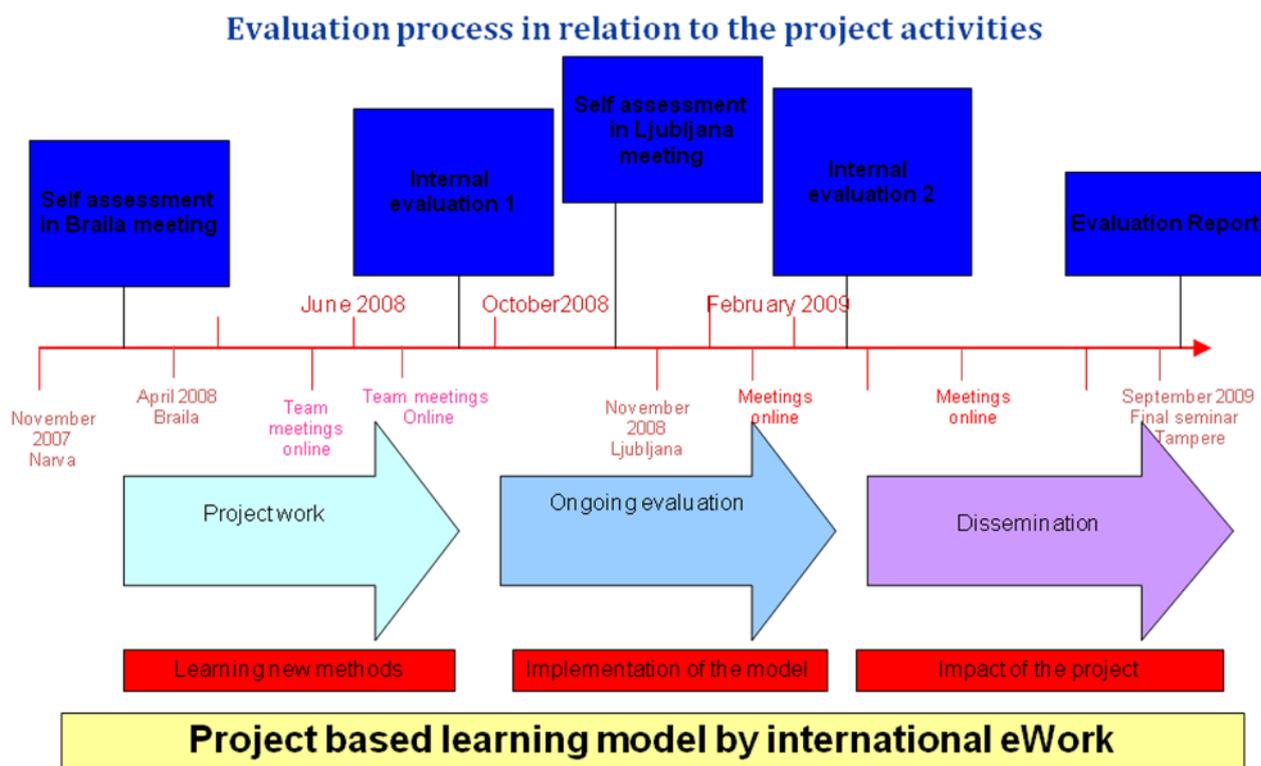
The internal evaluation activity will be documented and reported utilizing formats established by Esedu. A summary report will be given in the interim report and the final report. The reports shall be approved by the whole partnership.

2.1.7 Corrective actions and evaluation

The results of the evaluation activities will be discussed in the portal which acts as an intranet for the partners and in partner meetings. Any deficiencies identified in the assessment will be discussed and appropriate correction actions will be established.

2.1.8 Self assessment matrix

(developed for the ISEeTT project, LdV, altered for the purposes of the PLIMe project)



2.2 PLIMe INTERNAL EVALUATION sample

For the period ___ to ____

To be circulated and reported to by each partner

1 – Work Activity

Work that you have completed so far

- Work that is still in progress
- Possible problems encountered in completing the work undertaken
- Deviation(s) from the original work plan (and justification for these)

2 – Co-ordination of the work

Were you periodically (and adequately) informed on project specific developments?

- Which is your main source of information regarding the project as a whole; specific project activities;
 - a)
 - b)
- In your opinion have the issues undertaken by the co-ordinating institution and the other partners been successfully addressed?
- Express your views on communication issues (both from technical and interpersonal perspectives)
- Other comments on management/coordination issues

3 – Application Results/Modifications

What do you regard as the project’s two main objectives for the next step of the project?

- In your opinion what is the “new knowledge” that has been generated in the frame of PLIMe until now.
- Propose changes (of any kind) that you feel are required in order to successfully complete the project
- State any difficulties you feel might arise in the project

4 – Other issues

State anything else you feel should be included in the internal evaluation – or issues that you think should be addressed in the forthcoming meeting

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The following table shows the questions stated and the answers from the four teams (AVC team, auto team, ele team and meca team) in the first round of evaluation.

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1 – Work Activities Work completed in work package 2

AVC team:

Theoretical work:

- Eworkplan2 on implementation (Papers on branding/brand architecture)
- Eworkplan3 tasks
- papers on media production
- paper on lightning, paper on sound, paper on storytelling
- Eworkplan video
- Side project Wayfinding in Europe
- Paper on signs
- Practical work: eworkplan2
- Layouts of logos/TShirts/CD-covers/folders/business cards/ letterheads
- Logo animation
- Website of PKKY Plime
- Side project way finding in Europe
- slideshows

AUTO:

- Task 1 - Car parts. Completed.

ELE:

- We have done several e-works about the different steps in the frame of the house automation project. It was very easy at the beginning, but now technical difficulty is growing.
- Joensuu (joint project): Parking hall control system
- Braila: part of the parking hall control system (testing)
- Celje: Exercises
- Nancy: First exercises
- Outokumpu: Temperature taking.

MECA:

- We are trying this exercise with SIEMENS Logo.

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Work in progress (WP 2)

AVC:

- Callsheet, video production, animation project on time, storytelling

AUTO:

- Task 2-Lambda sonda. In progress, missing calculation.
- Task 3-Car body repair- In progress. Students have to fill in the last table.
- Task 4-Why doesn't the car start. Task planned for 2009.
- Task 5-International oversize transport. Task planned for 2009.

ELE:

- Everything is done; we only have to put more material on website.

MECA:

- Wiring and practical testing.

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Possible problems encountered in completing the tasks in comparison with the project aims and deviation(s) from the original work plan (and justification for these)

AVC:

- Platform: not usable for visuals, films cannot be uploaded because of lack of space, it does not work properly with different kinds of browsers, linking problems, a chat room is missing.
- Communication: difficult to activate students, not enough work time for proper communication which is needed for international team work, lack of language skills

AUTO:

- Students are in 1st year of education – Difficulty of tasks.
- Courage is missing from students in online meetings by skype. Language experiences missing.
- Different educational courses (logistics, car body repair, car mechanics) in AUTO group.
- Students are in work placement and practice periods in companies outside of school.
- Motivation for students.
- Change of persons involved in tasks of PLIME project.

ELE:

- Braila: buying equipment
- Joensuu: no students at the beginning
- Outokumpu: Shy students (don't want to communicate) - prefer to work alone
- We didn't organize Skype conference. Different timetables for different schools. Language problems. No specific time in the curriculum for the project.

MECA:

- We don't use enough of e-applications (sharepoint portal), problems with equipment, time, including project into curriculum.

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How to keep up with the project schedule till the end of the project?

AVC:

- Create a realistic schedule and keep the deadlines, work timetables should be more transparent,
- sharing problems and ideas, regular meetings on the platform once a month, regular feedback and modification of actions

AUTO:

- No new tasks. By giving clear instructions to students.

ELE:

- Start Skype conferences on fixed dates.

MECA:

- Cooperation between teachers and students.

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2 – Results and modifications

What are the most important objectives for the next step of the project?

AVC:

- Platform it is not usable for AVC
- Clear tasks and monitoring
- Improvement of communication

AUTO:

- Finish few details in Task 2 and 3.
- Separate tasks: Task 4 - Why doesn't the car start for car mechanics and Task 5-International oversize transport for logistics.

ELE:

- To do different tasks and integrate them into the main project. Improve communication.

MECA:

- To offer the student the new way of e-learning using e-work projects.

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In your opinion what is the “new knowledge” that has been generated in the frame of PLIMe until now. Please indicate ways for dissemination of this “new knowledge” (good practices).

AVC:

- Using platform structures
- Students learned new teaching methods
- New pedagogical aspects of elearning
- Intercultural dialogues

Dissemination:

- Presentation of the project on school websites
- Presentation to colleagues and pupils at home
- Presentation to guests of the school
- Material can be used in normal classrooms as well

AUTO:

- Knowing names of auto parts in foreign languages.

- Location and working voltage for lambda sensors.
- Comparison of prices between two countries.
- Find out about working plan for car body repair.
- International e-meetings.

ELE:

- Technical aspect of learning programming microcontrollers in new future ways.
- Nancy: Sharepoint is difficult and expensive so they started exploring new electronic platforms for local use in the first time and maybe deploy it among different schools.
- We could use local TV stations.

MECA:

- Importance of team work via e-learning and exchanging the information.

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Propose changes (of any kind including changes in roles and responsibilities of persons) that you feel are required in order to successfully complete the project

AVC:

- Change to a better elearning platform for new Leonardo projects in the future.
- Qualification for project teachers as certified etutors.

AUTO:

- Separation of tasks by different sectors and target groups: Task 4 for car mechanics and Task 5 for logistics.

ELE:

- Voitto always changes the structure of Sharepoint. Please leave it as we create it.

MECA:

- Synchronize timetables of schools. More communication between teachers.

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State any difficulties you feel might arise during the project

AVC:

- We have stated it above.

AUTO:

- Lack of common practices or rules may cause delays or extra work (that is time consuming).

ELE:

- It will be difficult to put the whole project together. Students should meet. Timetable problems.

MECA:

- Because students have finished their course/ studies, they are not available.

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3 – Co-ordination and cooperation in the project

Have you received enough information on project aims and development work? What kind of information would you need, by whom and when?

AVC:

- Very good support in every way during the problems.
- Main tasks should be introduced in a more concrete way.
- Lectures about basics of elearning should be given to the teachers before the project planning starts.

AUTO:

- Not in correct format and at right time. Clear and precise information at the beginning of project.

ELE:

- The coordinator should present the organisation (more details) the platform at the beginning of the project. We have many documents on the platform, but we don't know how to organize them for others to find.

MECA:

- Yes.

=====

Which is your source of information regarding

- a) the project as a whole**
b) specific project activities

AVC:

- a)Voitto Nuutinen
 - platform
 - project meetings
- b)Voitto Nuutinen
 - platform
 - email of project partners

AUTO:

- e-mail information, Plime web site,
- e-work task plan in not very useful.
- meetings with workshops

ELE:

- e-mail from Voitto, Sharepoint
- e-mail from participants, Sharepoint

MECA:

- a)meetings at platform
 - b)project e-work
- =====

Have the issues undertaken by the co-ordinating institution and the other partners/ teams been successfully addressed?

- a) whole project level**
- b) your team level**

AVC:

- a) yes, very good
- b) yes, very good

AUTO:

- a) generally OK, information's available all the time
- b) generally we have done good work with some delays

ELE:

- a) Yes
- b) No, changes to the platform without our consent

MECA:

Yes.

=====

Express your views on the communication in the project (both from technical and interpersonal perspectives)

AVC:

- Communication skills for conferences with skype should be improved by opportunities for project teachers to learn from their finnish partners.

AUTO:

- Communication is necessary and more efficient in 'live' meetings.
- Online meetings are also big piece of experience, however they are not for big work progress.
- E-mail communication is OK.

ELE:

- We miss e-mail and video conference support integrated in the platform.
- Students are shy.

MECA:

- It's hard to communicate because we are using different languages. Different holiday time and work days.

=====

Report on how your investment (time + resources allocated to the project) relates to the allocated budget.

AVC:

- Estonia/Slovenia/Germany: imbalance between working time and money. Much more work than it was paid for.

AUTO:

- e.meetings: 3 hours
- workshops: 4x3days
- work with students: 1h/week

ELE:

- Overworked, underpaid.

MECA:

- The allocated budget helped us to realize the tasks of the project.

=====

Other comments on management/coordination issues

AVC: -

AUTO: Tomorrow.

ELE: No comments

MECA: How to motivate teachers and students? Maybe each school doing a different project.

=====

2.3 Conclusions

The teams worked in a very intensive way and there was good discussion on the issues addressed. Some of the questions very not easy to understand and the evaluator went from group to group to interpret the questions. The group discussion supported intercultural cooperation and encouraged the teams to discuss the aims, results and possible problems encountered. Most teams commented that they had agreed on the future steps in the project.

The above evidences suggest that in the period under evaluation all partners were active in implementing the first eWork tasks. A collaborative approach to the implementation of the tasks was adopted in most teams. Some teams commented that in the collaboration it's hard to take into consideration social aspects such as linguistic and cultural differences, national requirements etc.

Every team is working on new eWork tasks and they are planning to finish and upload the first part of the tasks in the near future. This is necessary, because all teams are behind schedule. All teams reported that they encountered technical problems in the building of ework tasks in the Sharepoint environment. The orientation given by the project leader at the beginning of the project was not enough. The coordinator has visited every partner country to be able to guide each partner individually which is extraordinary and exceptional in international projects. Yet, the problems often seem to focus on the environment and its non-usability. The coordinator has reacted on the feedback from the partnership and interpreted the delays of eWork tasks partly as technical problems and therefore made changing and updating work in the Sharepoint

environment. The teams feel these constant changes a bit annoying. Like in any other eLearning projects, VLEs (virtual learning environments) cause technical problems but reasons for unachieved goals lie elsewhere.

Partners have encountered problems in completing the work activities, partly because of work overload, partly because of lack of fixed timetables, rules and deadlines. They also mention lack of interaction of both teachers and learners, lack of motivation as tasks are not always part of the curriculum but extra for the students, lack of courage and language skills which causes problems in online meetings and difficulties in defining the level of tasks in relation to the prior knowledge of learners. Different timetables in different schools are also seen as one big problem and simultaneous work may sometimes feel impossible. Change of persons in partner organizations makes developing work difficult as it takes time to start from the beginning with new partners.

The problems encountered in relation to the contents of the eWork tasks and their productions have to do mostly with intercultural differences, the level of elearning in different countries and different curricula rather than the project itself. Problems and challenges are also a good sign as they give the partners reasons to solve them and force partners to do international team work.

All partners are of the view that the coordinator has responded well to the partners and project needs requirements. All partners report that project meetings are good forums for the discussion and information sharing and this is why new ways to communicate have to be found as there are no project meetings coming before the dissemination seminar in the autumn 2009. The best communication means so far has been the email. One team has held regular online meetings on a monthly base.

All in all, the issue of intercultural collaboration, a central parameter in the project, was not adequately developed by all partners. This is quite understandable since countries are on different level in relation to the technical requirements.

It appears that a great deal of communication regarding project issues were done directly between the coordinator and partners, either as one to one communication or one to team communication. Noted should be that management has invested a lot of resources to communicate with partners and teams. The teams report that help and guidance was offered by the coordinator immediately as the questions arised. There is a lot of communication to the whole partnership as well and changes in the work plan etc. are informed without delays.

All teams find ways for keeping up with the project schedule in the future. They need realistic schedules and setting of deadlines, not to mention keeping the deadlines. They also feel that the aims, work plans and activities completed or in progress have to be made more transparent. Some teams report that there has not been enough problem sharing or discussion on ideas so far. They would also need clearer instructions on who does what, when and for what purpose. Every team agrees that regular meetings (from now on with the help of online tools) and cooperation between teachers and learners are needed.

When reporting project innovativeness, and new knowledge gained in the project so far, the teams mention acquiring of new skills, eg. using the platform and exploring new VLEs (virtual learning environments), new ways of communication (eg. skype) and international communication skills and team work. What is very important, teams report on new teaching methods, pedagogical viewpoints and difference between face-to-face teaching and eLearning. Partners are willing to increase their understanding into the requirements for eLearning issues.

It is stated that the partners through the implementation of the eWork tasks have increased their understanding into the requirements for eLearning issues, and there is interest on further training in this field.

All teams report that the project is being coordinated well. Partners are happy with the amount of information provided. The coordinator seems to be the main source of information and he uses a lot of time resources to guide the teams. One team especially reports the effectiveness and quick answers to the questions. However, partners wish that the main tasks in the project were introduced in a more concrete way.

Teams proposed the following changes: better eLearning platform in the future projects, further training of teachers on eLearning and tutoring, more communication, and no more changes in the structure of Sharepoint without feedback from the teams.

2.4 Recommendations

- More clarity is needed as to what the next phase of activity is and why is it undertaken.
- Teams need to learn different online tools (eg. skype or messenger) in order to organise regular virtual meetings in the second half of the project.
- The usability and appropriateness of the tasks in relation to the curricula in different countries has to be assessed and considered.
- Skills and knowledge needed from the target groups to complete the tasks in different countries has to be defined.
- Some of the key elements and concepts of the project have to be defined and agreed soon in order to achieve the main objectives of the project.
- Common rules are needed to put the whole project together and to finish the final products and develop a final concrete exploitable project documentation
- The sustainability of the project should be kept in mind

Overall, it seems that all teams have conducted the work as planned and in the context of the project requirements, though not in the right schedule. The partners activities are in line with the project objectives and there is a relative satisfaction on the manner by which the work is coordinated. Partners appear to be learning from the work these are involved in.

The partnership has not yet recognized enough the issue of dissemination. One team reports that little project dissemination was undertaken in the first half of the project already. The project should definitely work more towards this direction after the Ljubljana meeting. Guidelines for dissemination and valorization were given in the meeting which helps the situation.

The sustainability of the project is perhaps not yet adequately considered. This is understandable given the differences in training approaches across Europe.