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Didactic Framework and Inventory of Methods



Didactic Framework

The didactic framework drawn up for PraelAB was realised with due regard to the specific conditions in the partner countries and was accepted by all as the basis for further project work.

The concept is based on the assumption that the focal point in dealing with dropout from vocational training needs to be shifted to early detection and prevention. To this end, viable concepts were supposed to be developed, tested, and implemented through the qualification of vocational training professionals. Special importance within the framework is given to the active inclusion of trainees, who are encouraged to use the online tool to diagnose themselves a latent or marked dropout inclination and to reflect on it. This constitutes a major step forward compared to most procedures which mainly rely on third-party assessment.

However the didactic framework had to refrain from making the online tool the sole key to prevent dropout from vocational training as a number of previous studies has clearly shown that the causes are multi-layered.

We had to take into account that the reasons given by the different parties involved strongly depend on each individual's pattern of attribution, and that this was the reason why some of the measures taken so far could not lead to success.

The didactic framework concept that is currently in place connects the following four areas:

1. Reach

- (a) Measures of vocational guidance at school to prepare and support the transition into vocational training (1st transition).
- (b) Qualified counselling, information and support during vocational training as well as outreach counselling for young people who drop out completely from education.
- (c) Preparation of and support in the transition into employment (2nd transition).

2. Methodology

The project combines the smK72+ online tool with counselling approaches that are specifically aimed at dropout prevention. What mattered most in this innovative approach was that the information gained with the help of the smK72+ instrument could be interpreted from the perspective of selected theories of occupational development and implemented through adequate counselling based on operative theories. The trial phase that has now started focuses on an intense exchange of experiences between the project partners regarding the combination of methods and the consequences for action. A systematic “on-site” documentation of these experiences offers the basis for a comprehensive description of an innovative approach to combine methods in dropout prevention previously not yet found in literature.

3. Training Concept

The pilot training (a three-day training course) for vocational training staff plays a pivotal role in the elaboration of the didactic framework. The curriculum includes background information on dropout from vocational training, use of the smK72+ online tool and interpretation of the data obtained, classroom feedback with demand-oriented teaching models, methodology of a counselling session based on the results obtained from the tool, and consequences for dropout prevention.

4. Sustainable Training Concept

Based on a systematic evaluation and discussion of the pilot training, a final training concept for the qualification of teaching and counselling staff will be developed.

Its sustainability is corroborated by the scientific analysis of the large data volume obtained from using smK72+ on about 2,500 trainees.

A special focus lies on the following questions: which dropout reasons can be identified by means of competence assessment and how likely is it that smK72+ can actually help to build up a counselling relationship with a trainee at risk of dropping out.

Finally, in order to support sustainability accreditation and/or certification of the training concept is planned in the partner countries.

Module Description of the Training Concept “Detection and Prevention of Dropout from Vocational Training of Young People” for vocational training staff and vocational guidance counsellors

Further training / study course	Teachers, trainers, counsellors, case managers, placement officers,
Module	Detection and analysis of interdisciplinary competences and dropout risks as well as planning, carrying out and evaluating counselling sessions
Objectives and competences	<p>Participants should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe the importance of early detection/support/prevention of dropout from vocational training of young people • assess the importance of interdisciplinary competences for initial vocational training • describe and use the diagnostic tool smK72+ on young people • evaluate and interpret competence profiles on interdisciplinary competences as well as tables on dropout risks and dropout reasons • plan, carry out and evaluate counselling based on young people’s data while taking occupational information into consideration • describe and apply the “Critical Incidents Technique” (CIT) • give differentiated analyses and descriptions of young people's needs for information • collect and prepare up-to-date information on a given occupation and its occupational field that meet the client’s needs • make national and international comparisons of offers of education, vocational training, on-the-job training and study courses • analyse and reflect on occupations and employment opportunities from the perspective of individual optimisation of benefit • apply selected qualitative social research and evaluation procedures
Course contents	<p>The science of counselling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • competence concepts, competence models, dropout rates, dropout reasons, support and prevention • diagnostics, test criteria, data analysis • in-depth counselling exercises and information management • communication and conflict resolution strategies • occupational biographies, careers and occupational paths • project work

ECTS credits (workload)	<p>5 (125)</p> <p>25 hours of attendance on the three days of the training course</p> <p>75 hours of study, development and implementation</p> <p>25 hours of qualification procedure through a report (optional)</p>
Recommended reading	<p>Balzer, L., Ertelt, B.J., Frey, A. (2012). Erfassung und Prävention von Ausbildungsabbrüchen – die praktische Umsetzung im EU-Projekt Praelab. In: Baumeler, C., Ertelt, B.J., Frey, A. (Eds.). Diagnostik und Prävention von Abbrüchen in der Berufsbildung. Landau: Verlag Empirische Pädagogik (in press).</p> <p>Ertelt, B.J., Schulz, W.E. (2011). Handbuch Beratungskompetenz (3rd edition). Leonberg: Rosenberger.</p> <p>Ertelt, B.J., Frey, A. (2012). Theorien der beruflichen Entwicklung und Beratung in ihrer Bedeutung für die Abbruchsprävention. In: Baumeler, C., Ertelt, B.J., Frey, A. (Eds.), loc. cit.</p> <p>Ertelt, B.J. (2003). Prävention von Ausbildungsabbrüchen durch Berufsberatung. In: Informationen für die Beratungs- und Vermittlungsdienste der Bundesagentur für Arbeit (ibv), 25/2003, p. 63–67.</p> <p>Frey, A., Ertelt, B.J., Balzer, L. (2012). Erfassung und Prävention von Ausbildungsabbrüchen in der beruflichen Grundbildung in Europa: Aktueller Stand und Perspektiven. In: Baumeler, C., Ertelt, B.J., Frey, A. (Eds.), loc. cit.</p> <p>Grassi, A. (2010). Früherfassung und pädagogische Diagnostik. In: Wolfensberger, R. (Ed.), FIB-Handbuch – Individuelle Begleitung in der zweijährigen Grundbildung (p. 50-62).</p> <p>Rübner, M. (2012). Beratung von Auszubildenden mit erhöhtem Abbruchsrisiko – Konzeptionelle Überlegungen zur Ausgestaltung des Beratungsprozesses. In: Baumeler, C., Ertelt, B.J., Frey, A. (Eds.), loc. cit.</p> <p>PowerPoint presentations:</p> <p>Balzer, L., Ertelt, B.J., Frey, A. (2011). Schulungsmaßnahme zur Erhebung und Prävention von Ausbildungsabbrüchen.</p> <p>Ertelt, B.J. (2011). Berufswahl- und -entwicklungstheorien (Objekttheorien).</p> <p>Ertelt, B.J. (2011). Ausgewählte Beratungsansätze (operative Theorien).</p> <p>Frey, A. (2011). Lehrabbruch: Gründe, Dynamik, Folgen und Prävention.</p> <p>Frey, A. (2010). Diagnose von Kompetenzen in der beruflichen Grundbildung.</p>

Teaching and learning methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture • Exercises • Project • Team work, self-controlled learning
Didactic method	<p>The course is intended to promote a critical examination of scientific and practical issues (competences, dropout, data collection, interpretation and assessment, counselling, support, prevention). Alternating between theory and practice should facilitate the transfer from theory into practice and vice versa.</p>
Qualification procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report (25 hours)

Inventory of Methods

The inventory of methods, developed during the course of the project and to be updated whenever necessary includes four areas:

1. Specific counselling approaches to dropout prevention based on heuristic models.
2. Classroom models aimed specifically at the preparation and application of class screening using smK72+ and presentation and interpretation of results as well as the selection of young people for counselling.
3. Innovative methods for vocational guidance and information strategies to reduce dropout rates.
4. Innovative methods for support in training and follow-up in individual transition processes.

Concepts that are supported by scientific evidence and that have been tested in practice exist for all four areas and are now being further implemented through the data collection and counselling activities initiated by all partners. It is also possible to benefit from the experiences made in Switzerland since spring 2011.

ad 1: Only such methods are to be used for individual counselling in dropout prevention which take into account multi-factorial causes. At the same time when choosing methods we had to ensure that dropout prevention would not be seen as close to clinical models but be perceived as a distinct field of vocational counselling.

Therefore PraelLAB included the problem management model by G. Egan, the solution-oriented approach as well as structural information methods as operative theories. In addition special attention was paid of multicultural aspects, because trainees with a migration background constitute a group that is particularly at risk.

One characteristic of counselling within the context of PraelLAB is related to contacting the client, initiating counselling, and clarifying the nature proper of counselling. Following a class screening using smK72+, the first step towards counselling can be

taken by the counsellor or teacher rather than by the counselee without compromising the voluntary nature of counselling and the open-endedness of the outcome.

Therefore theories of choice of occupation and professional development (object theories) are crucial for the interpretation of the dropout causes. They facilitate a transparent definition of the problem and the client's needs.

The inventory of methods used specifically in PraelAB is based on the following material:

Ertelt, B.J., Schulz, W.E. (2011). Handbuch Beratungskompetenz. Leonberg: Rosenberger, 3rd edition.

Ertelt, B.J., Frey, A. (2011). Theorien der beruflichen Entwicklung und Beratung in ihrer Bedeutung für die Abbruchsprävention. In: Baumeler, C., Ertelt, B.J., Frey, A. (Eds.). Diagnostik und Prävention von Abbrüchen in der Berufsbildung. Landau: Verlag Empirische Pädagogik (in press).

Rübner, M. (2011). Beratung von Auszubildenden mit erhöhtem Abbruchsrisiko – Konzeptionelle Überlegungen zur Ausgestaltung des Beratungsprozesses. In: Baumeler, C., Ertelt, B.J., Frey, A. (Eds.), loc. cit.

Ertelt, B.J. (2011). PowerPoint presentation on theories of the choice of occupation and professional development (object theories)

Ertelt, B.J. (2011). PowerPoint presentation on selected counselling approaches (operative theories).

ad 2: The preparation, implementation and follow-up of the class screenings require special classroom models. Basic requirements to a successful implementation of the entire PraelAB procedure are the voluntary participation and involvement of the trainees and/or vocational education students. Hence the role of counsellor must be distinct from that of the teacher.

Intense evaluation of the teaching approaches (structural plan and curriculum) as well as implementation using the “critical incidents technique” (evaluation grid provided) can help to identify the ideal classroom models to carry out the class screening.

ad 3: Bearing the specific conditions in the partner countries in mind, PraelAB serves to further develop innovative methods of vocational counselling and infor-

mation based on previous recommendations. The concept rests on the following pillars:

(1) More in-depth vocational counselling (if possible, starting in 7th grade at school:

- The systematic transmission of career management skills (CMS)
- Competence assessment and self-evaluation
- Comprehensive information about vocational domains
- Hands-on work experience
- Cooperation with external learning venues
- Accompaniment and support by social workers.

In this context, the “Jobstarter” projects in Germany are analysed and evaluated in detail (www.jobstarter.de).

(2) Recommendations for the further development of basic expert knowledge in the context of PraelLAB

- Demand-oriented systems of vocational information must be given more prominence compared to supply-oriented systems.
- Media on career studies must concentrate more strongly than before on status criteria and areas of conflict in company-based vocational training.
- Vocational orientation and counselling should be more critical of the “trait-and-factor” approaches that are based on the assumption of optimum reconciliation of person and occupation in the sense of a pre-stabilised harmony.
- Vocational counselling must abandon the idea that the person choosing his/her profession must make a rational decision. Such normative models lead to “information overload” and to a reduction in individual problem-solving skills.
- When investigating occupational aptitude, differentiate more accurately between “suitability to apply”, “suitability for vocational training”, “suitability for the training company” and “occupational suitability in employ-

ment". Up until now vocational counselling seems to rely on a relatively abstract and very generalised idea of profession.

- Intensification of marketing targeted at trainees at risk of dropping out in the sense of an effective communication policy and the provision of low-threshold counselling and support offers.
- Special attention must be paid to early detection of social disadvantages and culture-specific, profession relevant characteristics of future employees.

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Frey, A. (2011). Lehrabbruch: Gründe, Dynamik, Folgen und Prävention. Speech and PowerPoint presentation, Bolzano, 28 September 2011.

Hochschule der Bundesagentur für Arbeit (HdBA) (2010). Part-module I a: Informationsgewinnung und Informationsmanagement. Brain Drain – Brain Gain. Qualifizierungsmodule für Beratungskräfte (LdV project. Transfer of innovation). Mannheim: HdBA Report 1/2010, p. 11 et seq.

ad 4: The methods of assistance currently still used in vocational training and follow-up of trainees must be urgently complemented. That is why PraelAB provides for continuous analysis and assessment of, among others, vocational counselling at the relevant institutions, the training assistance grants by BA, the initiatives of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research such as “education chains”, and several other initiatives, often referring to one region or branch of industry only, and/or projects in Germany as well as corresponding initiatives in the partner countries. This is the prerequisite for the kind of case management in the support in vocational training which must be further developed within the scope of PraelAB.

PraelAB's inventory of methods for training assistance and follow-up has the following characteristics:

- Close cooperation of vocational guidance counsellors and vocational training staff as well as of vocational education teaching staff.
- Intensification of low-threshold counselling and information offers for trainees combined with specific marketing.
- Greater attention paid to the post-decision phase in the offers made by vocational counsellors and placement officers.
- Intensification of local networking with vocational guidance counsellors, chambers, authorities of social institutions, promoters of training assistance grants, initiatives for vocational training assistance with a special focus on migration-related issues.
- Financial aid and debt counselling, especially for trainees who no longer live with their parents.
- In order to stabilise the motivation for vocational training, young people should be told how instrumental their vocational training is for their future careers. This includes active and passive substitution potentials as well as opportunities for in-house training and professional promotion.

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