

Integration of Erasmus+ project's results into academic curricula-good practice example of the "Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad

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Abstract: The transfer of methodology from the non-formal education area to the formal education area is one of the aims of the Erasmus+ program and one of the priorities of the current education. An example of this type of transfer is also the product made under the project "The Suitcase, the Map and the Voyage of a Youth Worker". These are career guidance tools - Career Box, Professional Simulations - that have been integrated as work and evaluation material as seminar activities for the Educational and Career Counseling disciplines within the Psychology bachelor Program of the "Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad. Students' use of the thevoyage.eu platform has enabled them to enrich their knowledge of career counseling but especially to work with interactive tools that put them in real situations of self-knowledge and in projective situations of using them tools as future counselors.

Key words: career counselling academic curriculum; non-formal education recognition; Erasmus+ projects curriculum universitar;

General description

The complexity of the challenges of higher education, the theoretical and practical aspects related to the educational policies in the field, to the managerial policies of the universities, but especially to the development of the educational process in the university, make necessary the existence of a university pedagogy whose objective is "the scientific analysis and the improvement of educational activities in higher education institutions, students' theoretical and practical instruction and education, as well as scientific research activity" (Ionescu, M., Bocos, M., 2000, p.227).

University pedagogy does not provide solutions for the present but, by looking at the future, tries to anticipate the evolutions and trends and, through the proposed solutions, contributes to the adaptation of the university to the requirements of the external environment and to the efficiency of the educational-educational process in the universities for the benefit of the students.

In the spirit of "creating the future" paradigm, "Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad implemented between 1 September 2015 and 31 August 2017 the Erasmus + project "The Suitcase, the Map and the Voyage of a Youth Worker" funded with the support of the European Commission. The partners of the project were: • CSD Consulting (Romania) coordinator • Millennium Center Association (Romania) • Schultz Development (Romania) • Dacorom (Spain) • Centrum Aktywnosci Tworzej (Poland); OPPI (Cyprus) • EURO - NET (Italy).

Methodology

The innovative nature of the project lied both in its purpose: professionalization at a European level of the Youth Workers career, but also from the developed learning platform that values the principles of interaction and gamming, so dear to today's young people. (**Thevoyage.eu**). Through play and discovery, those on the platform can go through the following project products:

O1 Career Box-Online Guide for Career Guidance, a Tool to be used in getting ready for a career nowadays, from discovering ones inner preferences to preparing themselves for an interview – 1st area;

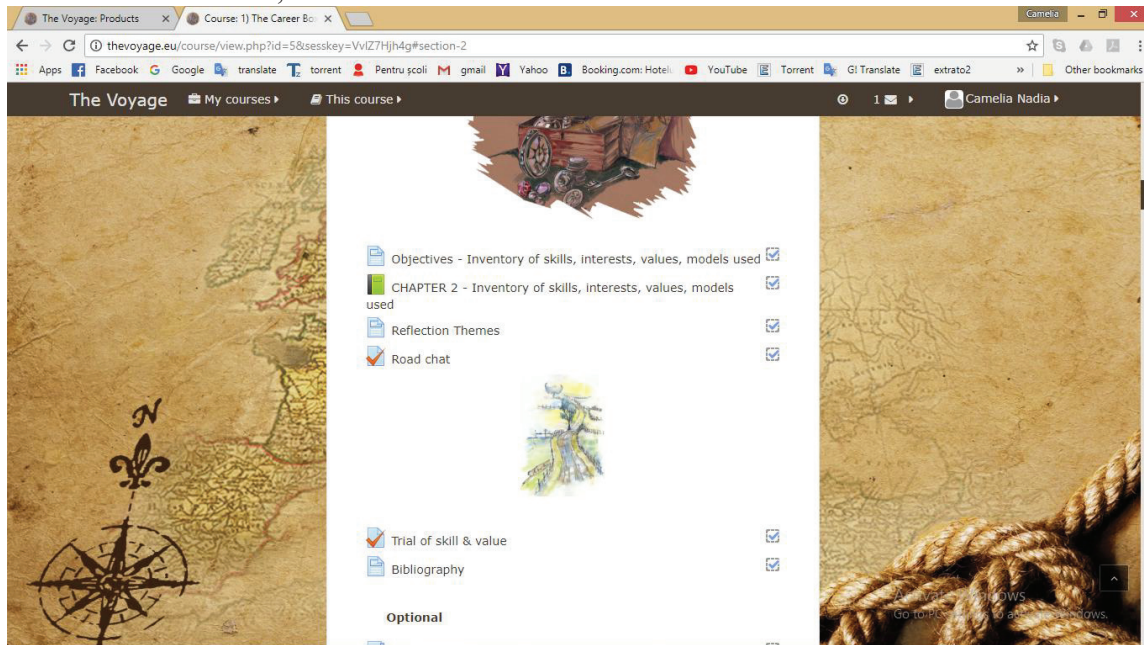


Figure no.1. Printscren of one chapter of Career Box

O2. **Simulation box of jobs-** Description of 10 occupations required on the labour market. The package for each occupation contains a **description** of the profession, a **video** presentation and a **simulation**, tasks and inventory of interests and abilities specific to that profession.

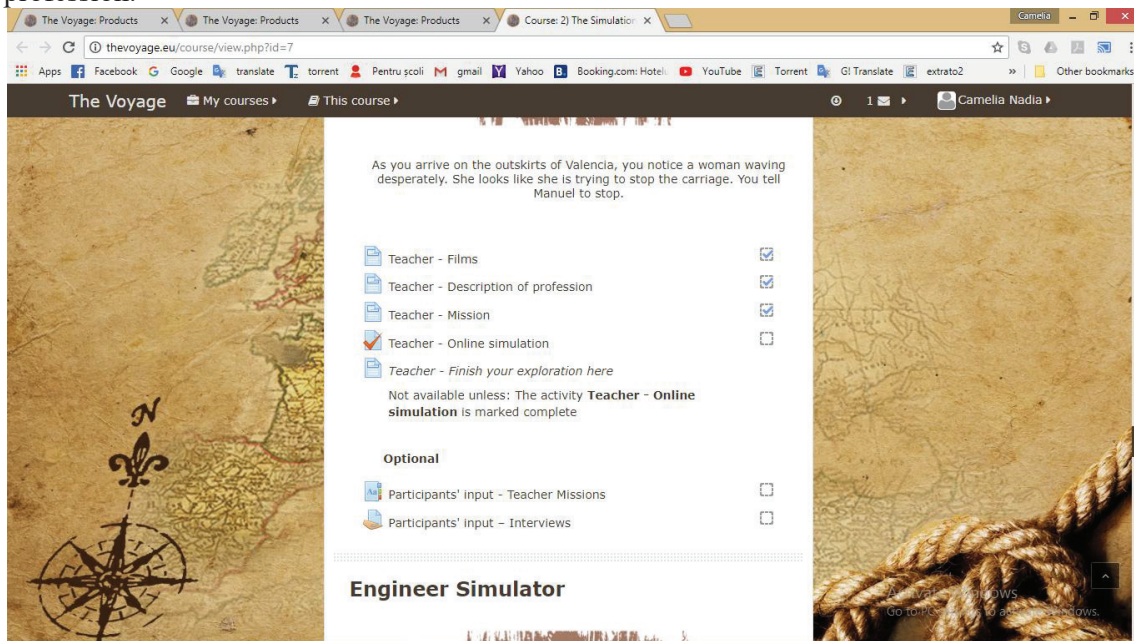


Figure no.2. Printscren of Simulation Box of Jobs

Students of Aurel Vlaicu University "from Arad and teachers from the Faculty of Sciences of Education, Psychology and Social Work were involved both in the process of designing and testing the products of the project as well as in the dissemination process.

Results

Taking into consideration the tools and materials developed within the project, we considered useful to use and disseminate them as working materials for students within the discipline *Educational and Career Counselling* which is included in the core curriculum of the Psychology Studies program, 3rd year, as well within the discipline *Counselling and orientation*, part of psycho-pedagogical teacher training program, level II.

The convergence of the objectives of these disciplines with the objectives of the learning sequences provided in the Career Box and in the Simulation Box was the first premise to support the use of these materials as ancillary to the students' seminar. It can be noticed that the objectives of these disciplines are oriented towards the development of a system of knowledge in the field of vocational counselling, but also on the formation of some competencies concerning the design and the implementation of vocational counselling activities. These objectives are overlapping to a very large extent with the operational objectives of the Career Box tool developed within the project.

Objectives of the discipline *Educational and career counselling*:

- Development of an applicative knowledge system in the field of vocational psychological counselling;
- Identify the general principles of vocational psychological counselling appropriate to different age groups;
- design and implement vocational psychological counselling programmes for children, young people and adults, by integrating their psychological peculiarities, market requirements and specific counselling tools;
- Developing a responsible attitude towards the contents of science, the ethical principles of work and the interest of the beneficiaries of vocational psychological counselling.

Objectives of *Career Box* tool on thevoyage.eu platform:

- identify self-knowledge tools;
- use self-knowledge tools;
- Identify the need to develop an Individualized Study Plan;
- Identify the advantages of implementing an Individualized Study Plan;
- to carry out an Individualized Study Plan, respecting the design stages;
- to follow principles of action that are useful in own professional development.

Contents within the discipline <i>Educational and Career Counselling</i>	Contents proposed by <i>Career Box</i> tool on Thevoyage.eu
1. Management and career counselling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career - Concepts and Current Theories • Career development stages • Mutations in the career context • Career management • Organizational management of the career 2. Personal characteristics relevant to career decisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characteristics of personality and professional career • Motivational structures and professional activity • Personal values and skills in career planning 	1. Self-knowledge, self-knowledge tools; 2. Inventory of competencies, interests, values, models used; Exploring occupations, sources, tools; 4. Planning of studies; 5. Tools used in career decision making, career planning; 6. Looking for a job; 7. Personal Branding; 8. Preparation of applications, CVs, letters of intent; models, the Europass portfolio; 9. How to Write a Curriculum Vitae;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocational Personality Theory (Holland) • Career Anchor Theory 4. Psychological counselling and professional career <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-knowledge and Self-Assessment • Psychological tools used in vocational guidance • Techniques of vocational psychological counselling 5. Aspects of the career decision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Components of career decision • Decision-making styles • Factors of the decision • Career Plan • Techniques to search for a job Seminar activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocational orientation - current challenges • Analysis of organizational career policies • Value lists as tools for psychological evaluation • JVIS Questionnaire - Use in Vocational Guidance • Compilation of a sample battery for psychological evaluation in vocational counselling • Group counselling - principles and techniques • Creating a career plan Drawing up a CV and letter of intent 	<p>10. Interview with a potential employer; employers 'and employees' perspectives on youth career development;</p> <p>11. Challenges and difficulties in the process of applying and interviewing for a job;</p>
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As we can see, the contents of Career box on the thevoyage.eu platform correspond to the contents described in the academic disciplines syllabus, regarding both course and seminar activities. Moreover, the way of organizing the learning activities of each chapter of the Career Box - learning objectives, contents, themes of reflection and tasks with an evaluative role - complements very well the direct activity from the course activities and the seminar. The learning activities included within the Simulation Box provide a wealth of information about the professions, but their value lies in the fact that they provide effective tools for future career counsellors or future teachers. Thus, each profession is described and short films presenting the profession are presented, which provides essential information for students to decide on a profession. Much more important as instrumental value are the missions and simulations proposed for all the 10th professions on the platform. It is obvious that future counsellors will be able to use these simulations as a framework from which simulations can also be made for other professions than those presented in the platform.

The final evaluation of the learning activities from this course involves calculating a weighted average of 70% - the written exam score and 30% - the seminar activity score. To evaluate the seminar activity, students can use the scoring system in the platform.

For the Career Box tasks - <http://thevoyage.eu/course/view.php?id=10> - the maximum score one can get is 1500 points (bonuses included), no bonuses - 1380. A possible rating grid for the The career is Box is 10 for those who receive the bracelet, for the rest only the point to consider, from grade 9 down:

Tabel no 1. *Equivalation between number of points obtained for completing The career Box and academic grade awarded*

No crt	Points on thevoage.eu Career box	Equivalent academic grade
1	Are bratară si minim 600 puncte	10
2	551-600	9
3	501-550	8
4	451 - 500	7
5	401 - 450	6
6	351 – 400	5
7	301-350	4
8	251-300	3
9	201-250	2
10	101 - 200	1
11	Sub 100	0

The Romanian and English sections were completed, according to the participants' final statements, in about 10 hours. Times vary between 3 hours and 50 hours.

For the SIMULATION BOX of JOBS we can not discuss the score as a equivalent for the academic grade, because it's relevant and connected to the occupations. Someone can navigate through but not matching with one of the 10 professions, then it's not logical to be sanctioned. Consequently, scoring can be done on the system referring to the number of professions visualized on the platform.

Table no.2 *Academic grading based on the number of the occupations simulations completed on thevoage.eu*

No crt	Standard	Grade	Comments
1	One has obtain the bracelet for – simulation box of jobs	10	It was completed at least 2-3 professions
2	One has obtain The hat simulation box	5	It was completed minimum one profession
3	No badge	0	It was no one finished

The final grade for the seminar will be the arithmetic mean between the two types of activities.

Conclusions

Instead of conclusions, we believe that students' opinions are relevant to the appreciation of this working tool used in university education. In this respect, the students appreciated the opportunity of the information provided, their clear structure, the extensive and clear information base, the accessibility of the information, the attractiveness of the proposed career counseling themes. At the same time it was appreciated the interactive way of working, especially the possibility of self-evaluation. Career guidance tools have been appreciated by the students for self-knowledge opportunities. These students feedbacks are consistent with those of the platform users. *"This course is very useful in secondary education counselling hours, for learning activities and small workshops about vocational counselling within the programme ,, To know more, to be better", for helping young students in choosing a job they would like to embrace afterschool graduation. The two instruments also enable students to developed their own learning plan, to set up learning goals, to take steps*

in order to achieve them and to measure its impact."(Carmen Biniuc, Colegiul Tehnic Gh. Asachi Iași)

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