



VccSSe – National level evaluation of the 3rd year of the project

Summary Report

0. Introduction

Every partner institution was asked to fill in the form concerning the National level evaluation of the third year of the project (see the Annex). The filled-in evaluation reports done by every participating institution were received by the Project Coordinating Institution (Valahia University Targoviste), as well as by the Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj Napoca team who processed the data and came out with the results presented below.

Eight different aspects have been investigated and concluded upon:

- Management of the project*
- Significance of the coordinating meetings*
- Cooperation with the coordinator and partners in/between meetings*
- Cooperation and support within the institution*
- Progress of the project*
- Commitment to the project during the third year*
- The strengths and weaknesses of the project*
- Follow-up outcomes of the project*

The following Report gathers the opinions given by the partnership at the end of the project regarding the actions taken and feelings for the continuation of the collaborative work on the use of Virtual Instrumentation in Science Education.

I. Management of the project

Management of the project was considered by all partners as *very clear* and *professional*. The competent guidance through the stages of the project, good communication (through e-mail, videoconference direct calls and encounters at the meetings), clear tasks, helpful attitude, dedication, great effort were the main characteristics of the coordinating team mentioned by the partnership. The coordinating institution did everything for providing a clear picture of outcomes and tasks of the project. They were supportive and transparent towards all the participants regarding both financial and project outcomes matters.

The management of the project on the institutions level has been assessed as very good on the whole, the actions of the project being included in institutional action plan and being monitored closely.

Meetings and videoconferences were considered important communication and decision opportunities. They were considered as very well organized.



VccSSe – National level evaluation of the 3rd year of the project

Summary Report

Considering that most of the tasks were solved before the last meeting, it can be concluded that the coordinator's efforts have been successful.

As regards the question: “**How easy or difficult do you find the paperwork?**”, some partners consider the paperwork not difficult, due to clear instructions from the coordinating institution and to the experience gathered in the previous years. Yet some institutions appreciated that they spend too much time filling in the detailed reports regarding the work done. They considered this work a little bureaucratic.

II. Significance of the Third Year coordinating meetings

1. Valladolid meeting (Spain) - December 2008

Valladolid meeting was considered by all partnership as very important for the project development due to the following aspects that have been agreed and fulfilled by the partnership:

- A final form of *Teachers' Products Matrix* and its content, together with the polished form of the *Matrix* presented in the *VccSSe* website;
- A significantly improved form of *VccSSe Exhibition* for presenting the best experiments;
- All the matters related to the *On-line meeting (Videoconference)* organization have been discussed in detail and the tasks for each partner till this event have been established;
- The preliminary conclusions concerning the pupils feedback gathered by the partners have been presented and the required information for creating the *Pupils' Feedback Synthesis* has been identified.

Having in view the importance of the *On-line meeting (Videoconference)* organization, the *Valladolid meeting* was a crucial for the development of the project activities during the third year.

2. Zaragoza meeting (Spain) - March 2009

Zaragoza meeting was appreciated by the partnership as very important for the project development due to the following aspects that have been agreed and fulfilled by the partnership:

- Evaluation of the *On-line meeting (Videoconference)* organized with the participation of European educators, on March the 11th, 2009; Strong points, technical problems, analysis of educators' comments were included in the *Evaluation Form*;
- Comments and discussions on the final form of the *Guideline for Best Practices*;



VccSSe – National level evaluation of the 3rd year of the project

Summary Report

- The final form of the *DVD-ROM Edition* (structure and content) for presenting the results of the *VccSSe* project;
- Improvement of the *VccSSe* project Dissemination with a collection of papers published in a special number of the *Educatia 21 Journal*, as an additional outcome which has not been foreseen in the project proposal;
- Improvement of the *VccSSe* evaluation by designing the structure of the *Final Evaluation Report* and spreading the related tasks for each partner;
- The final conclusions and figures concerning the number of the *VI experiments implementations* in the classroom and pupils' questionnaires.

Most of the partners mentioned the fact that the tasks for the following period were formulated very clearly and in direct correlation with the objectives of the project.

3. Bielsko-Biala meeting (Poland) - June 2009

Bielsko-Biala meeting clarified the phase of the project and made possible to focus on the final activities. This meeting was considered by partnership as significant from the *Evaluation* point of view. The following aspects have been settled:

- Steps to be followed for assuring a proper evaluation of the project;
- Preparation of the external evaluation procedures;
- Strategies for improving the dissemination of the project;
- Identifying the necessary information for filling in the *Final Report* - Distribution of the tasks related to this issue within the partnership;
- Actions for improving the *VccSSe* web system in order to provide the transparency and usability of all the work done in the frame of the project;
- Establishing the final form of the *Dissemination Volume (Educatia 21 Journal - Special Number, 2009)*.

4. Cluj Napoca meeting (Romania) - September 2009

Cluj Napoca meeting was the final meeting that offered to the partnership the possibility to generally evaluate the project and its outcomes and also to discuss about the Final Report and share the tasks for its elaboration. This meeting was very important due to the following aspects:

- The work for preparing the External Evaluation Report;
- Gathering the dissemination activities proofs from each partner;
- Identifying the aspects that have to be improved till the end of the project;
- Meeting and discussion with the external evaluator and finding out his preliminary conclusions and perspective presented in the *External Evaluation Report*;



VccSSe – National level evaluation of the 3rd year of the project

Summary Report

III. Co-operation with the coordinator and partners in / between meetings

1. Co-operation with the coordinator

The cooperation with the coordinator was regarded as very good, very satisfactory and competent by all partners. The partners were kept informed about the tasks and remaining actions and they could find support and fast answers for all the questions and unsolved tasks. Good, fluid and quick communication was highly appreciated.

2. Co-operation with the other project partners

Videoconference proved very helpful in the cooperation as far as achieving current goals was concerned. The cooperation load was increased during this year as a lot of outcomes and tasks that really needed team work were accomplished.

IV. Co-operation and support within your institution

Most of the partners appreciated the cooperation with technicians as very good. The technicians responded promptly to the VccSSe team requests. Film recording and videoconference particularly implied the help of technicians. The Finish partner appreciated that the team members were highly educated in the field so they could stand the technical requirements in good conditions.

All of the partners appreciated the cooperation within the local project team as very good, satisfactory or improved comparing with previous years. Teams were appreciated as friendly, ready to discuss and re-discuss project issues and with a helpful attitude.

The cooperation between the financial department and the project coordination provided the premises for a clear and accurate financial situation of the project. Partnership appreciated that the cooperation at this level was very good. The teams have got all the support needed from the financial departments.

Generally, the support of the institution towards the project during the third year was very good and present. In one case the partner mentioned that the attitude was neutral.



VccSSe – National level evaluation of the 3rd year of the project

Summary Report

V. Progress of the project

Progress of the project has been appreciated on nine aspects / items, five of which have been processed quantitatively (poor, quite good, good, very good, and excellent) and four qualitatively. Answers from 8 partners were counted at this point, the last one sending the evaluation after the 30th of September 2009.

To the question: “**How do you assess the outcomes in relation to the timetable of the third year?**”, there are two “excellent” three “very good” answers and two “good” answers and one “quite good” answer.

To the question: “**How would you evaluate the efficiency of the “students’ classroom impact assessment tool?”**”, there are three “very good” answers and five “good” answers.

To the question: “**How would you evaluate the efficiency of the “teachers’ classroom impact assessment tool?”**”, there are four “very good” answers, two “good” answers, one “quite good” and one “excellent” answer.

To the question: “**What is your opinion on the quality of the VI exhibition contents after the third year of the project?**”, there is one “excellent” answer and seven “very good” answers.

To the question: “**How easy or difficult did you find motivating teachers for participating to the video-conference?**”, some of the partners reported that this was not very easy as some of them targeted a large number of teachers, others could not match the videoconference programme with the possibilities of all teachers to participate. Yet, four of the partners reported that they had no problems, as teachers found the event genuine and interesting, so they were willing to take part.

To the question: “**What would be your suggestions for improving the video-conference session?**”, three of the partners had no suggestions and considered the session as very well organized. Yet, other partners appreciated that the main problem was the audio connection that was poor from time to time due not to technical problems but to human misuse. Consequently the suggestion was to provide the participants with a complete list of instructions on how to use the videoconferencing system. More time dedicated to the meeting and providing the participants in advance with support contents were other suggestions made.

To the question: “**What are the main factors which contribute to a successful implementation of a transnational videoconference for teachers?**”, the partnership referred to three types of factors:



VccSSe – National level evaluation of the 3rd year of the project

Summary Report

Content factors:

- Interesting and genuine topic of the video-conference;
- Communicative English language skills;
- A discussion and conclusions sequence proved to be very necessary and rewarding for the participants.

Technical factors:

- Adequate technical facilities of all partners (especially the sound quality);
- Technical experience using video conference systems.

Organizational factors:

- No cost for travelling to participate in a transnational conference;
- No time consuming to participate in a transnational conference;
- Impressive feelings due to the capacities of New Technologies to bring together people from different countries;
- Participants must know and respect the golden rules of the videoconference;
- The programme must be respected during the videoconference;
- The training sessions before the videoconference;
- A very clear script for the order of participation of the partners.

To the question: “**Was easy or difficult to get a clear idea of the project objectives in the third year? Why?**”, the partnership appreciated that they very easily made a clear idea of the third year project objectives, as during the meetings the goals got well explained and as the third year was dedicated to the evaluation of data and products obtained in previous years.

VI. Commitment to the project during the third year

Commitment to the project during the second year ranges from “total” (1 institution) to “more work than expected”. On the whole, the partners have been very involved in various tasks and activities of the projects and have been doing their best to accomplish them successfully and on time.

In most cases partners allocate more of their regular working time for the project, stating that it depends on the workload they have as well as the project tasks. Some of the partners considered the third year a demanding one so they sometimes allocated extra time in weekends or evenings. Nevertheless two partners mentioned that they enjoyed the working as the project provided them a lot of professional satisfaction. Due to additional outcomes (e.g. the preparation of the *Dissemination Volume* and the work done for the *External Evaluation Report*) the time allocated for the project development exceeded the estimated time in the proposal, in the case of some institutions.



VccSSe – National level evaluation of the 3rd year of the project

Summary Report

VII. The strengths and weaknesses of the project

1. Mention, if any, the weaknesses of the project in its current stage and clarify the reasons:

Three of the partners identified no weaknesses of the project. Yet, others considered that given the life span of the project it is normal to have some things that would need improvement. Aspects mentioned are:

- Some tasks were not distributed equally on the partners. But this allocation was done mainly function of the partners' skills and abilities.
- Limited resources to allocate for the project.
- No so much qualitative data collected from teachers and students involved in the project. Due to this fact, not so much theorization on the outcomes of the project was possible.
- It would have been better not to focus on so many different virtual technologies.

2. Mention the strengths of the project in its current stage and clarify the reasons:

The partnership mentioned the following strengths:

- The Partnership itself. The Project team had in composition: ICT specialists, pedagogy experts, teacher trainers, English Language teachers, evaluation specialists etc. In this way it was not difficult to allocate the proposed tasks to the partners!
- Numerous results of the project (mentioned by three partners), more than those stipulated in the project proposal that offer a realistic and clear image of the European perspective towards the usability of the VI instruments in Science education. We made sure that all the views of the users were taken: teachers, students, curriculum perspective.
- Given the fact that partnership represents a variety of countries, we may say that the project was a good solution for appreciating the European view on use of virtual instrumentation in Science education.
- The dissemination results exceed the initial expectations.
- Several materials related to methodology have been created.
- Wonderful cooperation among European partners (mentioned by three partners).
- Management job done by project coordinator. 😊
- The dissemination of the results and of lessons learned during the project in a wide population of teachers and researchers.
- High level of requirements: videoconference, project DVD Edition, project different forms of evaluation.



VccSSe – National level evaluation of the 3rd year of the project

Summary Report

VIII. Follow-up outcomes of the project

To the question: “**What are your expectations concerning the impact of the project on the use of virtual instrumentation in education?**”, the partnership appreciated that the project impact related to the use of virtual instrumentation in education is strongly linked with the introduction of virtual experiments in the classrooms that should be supported officially. Project offered a good collection of teaching materials created in different languages as well as teacher training materials. The partnership also offered reflections on the classroom impact of VIs that may be useful for future research. Through the theoretical and applicative contributions the project will contribute to extend the use of this kind of tools.

The partnership appreciated how satisfying is the **third year dissemination** activity with reference to:

- a. Quality of the “*DVD Edition of the Project*” product.
- b. Quality of the *Project Dissemination Volume*. This was appreciated as “excellent” (4 answers), “very good” (2 answers) and “good” (2 answers).
- c. Conferences presentations, papers, articles etc. This was appreciated as “excellent” (2 answers), “very good” (5 answers) and “good” (1 answer).
- d. *Guidelines for Best Practices in Educational Use of Virtual Instrumentation*. This was appreciated as “excellent” (3 answers), “very good” (4 answers) and “good” (1 answer).

The contribution of the institution to the dissemination activities of the project was appreciated as “excellent” (3 answers), “very good” (3 answers), “good” (1 answer) and “quite good” (1 answer).

To the question: “**How do you intend to valorize the results of the project after the project?**”, the partnership mentioned the following manners and actions:

- Future projects can be proposed on the base of the results of *VccSSe* project. The *e-Space* represents the main starting point for building a new proposal that can contribute to a large spreading of the virtual experiments with a view to be used in *Secondary Education*.
- Exploring the virtual experiments for being introduced in *Primary Education* represents a real challenge and a possibility to go further on developing new educational methodologies and practical activities with the pupils.
- Conducting more VI courses.
- Using the DVD in encouraging others to make similar activities.
- Presenting the Web site in order to inform other interested into the topic or similar ones.



VccSSe – National level evaluation of the 3rd year of the project

Summary Report

- Try to help teachers from the secondary schools to build virtual laboratories and show how to use virtual instrumentation using our products.
- Use the training materials produced during the project, to educate teachers and also students in University about the introduction of ICT in education (mentioned by four partners).
- Use the collection of VIs and of lesson plans produced during the project to educate teachers to use them in their classroom practices.
- Exploit even more the results from practice for article writing and conference participations.
- To keep in touch with the teachers participating in the project in order to evaluate their experiences.

The partnership considers important to further make their work known to the professional community and to initiate future cooperative activities in the field of new technologies and Science Education.