

# IO 4.1

## PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

Conceptual Framework for Intensive Training

Online International Learning, Learning by Development,  
Problem-Based Learning, Participatory Development



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## INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION

### Dear Readers,

before introducing the pedagogical approaches that we apply in the VISIT project, we would like to give you some insights to the project and the cooperation between students, teachers and local companies.

VISIT stands for 'Versatile Islands cooperating for new Services and Innovation in Tourism'. One of the major goals of VISIT is to strengthen the intercultural relationship between education, research and business. But how could we do that?

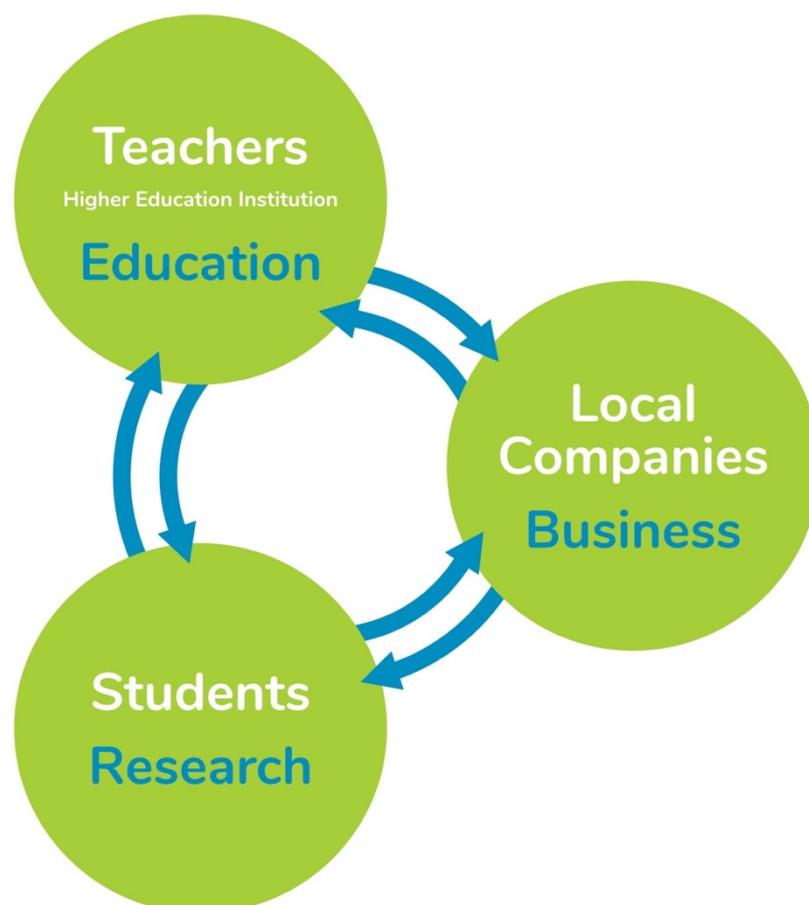
Key activities of VISIT are five Intensive Study Programs (ISP) on selected islands. During these ISPs students work together with teachers and businesses to develop new service ideas at the location of the ISP. Activities are designed to produce new knowledge for each of the participants.

The pedagogical aim of VISIT during the ISP is to equip the students with skills and knowledge that are relevant in working life. Students are placed in multinational teams with members representing different study programs and having different kind of backgrounds. The student teams meet small and medium enterprises (SME) with which they will be working with from the first day of the ISP. The businesses will equip the students with relevant and important information and facts so that the students are able to start generating new innovative and suitable ideas. The businesses are seen as clients for the students.

While the students are working in teams they are supported by teachers. Teachers provide students with theories, methodologies and practical workshops. They get theoretical knowledge that they can transfer into practice right away. So, students are able to work efficiently and learn at a rapid pace. If the students need more information about the businesses, they can ask their clients for the missing content or pay a visit if it is necessary. Students also get the chance to test their ideas or the developed prototype at the ISP. Therefore, they get in touch with customers or potential customers of their client, investigate the environment or interview people to finetune or adjust their ideas or prototypes. At the end, the students present their final results to their clients, all students and all teachers. They receive feedback from all listeners that they can use for the next steps.



The economic objective of VISIT is to stimulate tourism through sustainable and innovative services. Business plans need to be written to achieve this. Therefore, business plans are being created afterwards. This business plan gives information about the basic facts of the business, the prototypes and suggestions about how to implement the ideas into practice. During the implementation the companies are supported by students who do an internship on the islands. The project is based on the concept that the participating companies can use external ideas and manpower to develop and implement new services and products instead of only using their in-house resources.



The whole project is a co-creational process: The local companies are just as involved as the students and teachers.

- The businesses on participating islands benefit from the fresh unconventional and fruitful ideas of the students, and get new scientific approaches from the teachers.
- The students broaden their horizons and come home with new theories, scientific methods, creativity tools and practical knowledge.
- The teachers improve partnerships with companies, start new partnerships and develop also their network to other universities.



# 1 OIL - PREASSIGNMENTS IN VLE

## 1.1 OIL – Online International Learning

OIL stands for *Online International Learning*. OIL is a learning technique which fosters intercultural project work between students of different countries and cultures. It gives every student the chance to gather intercultural experiences without being away from their home country (Coventry University).

This sort of *IT-supported international learning* is often referred to as virtual mobility (Villar-Onrubia und Rajpal 2016, 77). The main idea of OIL is that two or more universities or industry professionals from different countries are doing a project together via online interaction. Projects are done in real-time; important is that they are interactive. A main characteristic is that learning outcomes are international by working on cross-border solutions together or by helping students to develop their intercultural competences. In this project OIL will be used to interact with companies also. OIL can be carried out in many different ways as described in the following section.

## 1.2 Forms and Benefits of OIL

Some OIL projects focus on mere international communication, like debates. Other projects include tasks which need to be solved together and have tangible outcomes like videos, software or graphic designs. Since the time-span of OIL projects is not predefined there are some projects that consist just of a few interactions and others are done over a whole term. Direct links between participating universities are not the only way to start OIL projects. Projects can also be based on partnerships like Erasmus agreements or other funds (Villar-Onrubia und Rajpal 2016, 79).

The main benefit of OIL is that students can learn to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds. Thus, intercultural management with all its different ways of verbal or non-verbal communication and other cultural dimensions can be learned by practicing it in real life. Students have the chance to work with people they have not met if it was not for the project and even to make new friends (Coventry University).

Besides cultural aspects students acquire new knowledge from their partners. By comparing different styles of working they can make their own conclusions about which style suits them better. Students can learn how to cope with different thought patterns which they do not agree with. Understanding is a big part in this learning process. Moreover, they can improve their digital skills by using some of the tools which will be presented in the paragraph below. Since real companies are working under same or similar circumstances OIL is a good way to prepare students for their work life (Coventry University).



### 1.3 Tools to use

The selection of communicating and collaborating tools should be perfectly adapted to each project. There are a lot of influencing factors starting from the number of participating students, their verbal confidence, time-differences, political situations or the teaching style of involved universities. Furthermore, the omnipresence of social networks leads to the situation, that students tend to build parallel communication platforms. Verbal confidence is also important for the tool-selection because students who are insecure in a foreign language rather like to write down their thoughts with time to double-check their grammar and spelling. Also, politics can have an influence in countries like China, where Facebook and other social networks are forbidden (Villar-Onrubia und Rajpal 2016, 80). Security and privacy things are also important - students must understand what kind of information they can share via digital platforms. Private personal issues or secret data of companies cannot be shared in unsecure platforms.

Keeping the factors above in mind, the following table evaluates the applicability of recommended tools for the VISIT project.

Tool	Category	Evaluation	Usable for OIL in VISIT
Adobe Connect	Videoconferencing	x	It is fee-based.
Autodesk Fusion 360	Collaboration (cloud-based product development platform)	x	It is specialized for product development.
ConnectWise Control	Video Conference	x	It is fee-based.
Diaspora*	Social network	x / ✓	It depends. Users can keep the rights on their data, but it is not as easy to use as Facebook.
Double robotics telepresence	Communication/Robotics	x	It is only available for iOS. Also, it is too complicated since it is connected with a robot.



<b>Dropbox</b>	Collaborate/Online Storage	✓	Yes, it is free and easy to use.
<b>E-Mail</b>	Communication	x	No, too “slow” and not made for group chats.
<b>Echo360</b>	Video platform	✓	Maybe. Can be connected with a LMS. Can be used for joint teaching.
<b>Facebook</b>	Social media	x	Groups are possible. But it is too personal for educational purposes and file sharing is not as easy as on collaboration platforms. Also, there are data/privacy issues.
<b>FaceTime</b>	Communication	x	It is only available for iOS.
<b>GnuSocial</b>	Social network	x	It is not as easy to use as Facebook.
<b>Google Drive</b>	Collaborate/Online Storage	✓	Yes, it is free and easy to use plus integrated access to Google docs.
<b>Google Hangout</b>	Communication/Video chat	✓	Yes, it is free to use and connected with a Google account which is also necessary for Google Drive.



<b>GoToMeeting</b>	Video Conference	x	It is fee-based.
<b>Instagram</b>	Social Media	x	No, except for marketing purposes.
<b>Join.me</b>	Video Conference	x	It is fee-based.
<b>Linkr</b>	Blogging	x	It can be used but is not necessary.
<b>Mahara</b>	EPortfolio/Open Source	x	It is outdated and not made for collaboration.
<b>Moodle</b>	Learning Management System	✓	Already used by some partner universities.
<b>Optima</b>	Learning Management System	✓	Already used by some partner universities.
<b>Padlet</b>	Collaboration	✓	Yes, it is a good tool for creative brainstorming. It is a freemium product.
<b>Peda.net</b>	Learning management system/ intranet/webpages	✓	Chosen for collaboration platform for online courses and materials in VISIT
<b>Schoology</b>	Collaboration/Communication/ Learning Management System	✓	Could be used. Some partners are using Moodle, some using Optima.



Skype	Video Conference	✓	It is free and supports every common operating system. A lot of students and teachers are using it already; VISIT will use Zoom as the main communication tool.
Snapchat	Communication	x	Messages get deleted automatically.
Soundcloud	Music and audio platform	x	It is about sharing music.
SparkoCam	Virtual Webcam	x	Not every camera type is supported.
TeamViewer	Video Conference	✓	It is free for private use and supports every common operating system; however VISIT will use Zoom. TeamViewer could be used for some special tasks.
Trello	Collaboration, organizing	✓	Organizing team work, planning
Tumblr	Blogging/social media	x	Originally, it is not made for collaboration.



Twitter	Social media	x / ✓	Could be a possible tool for collecting information and for ideation process, dissemination of service ideas etc.  Not for learning purposes.
Unity	Game engine/virtual world	x	It is for game developing.
WeChat	Communication/Video chat	✓	Yes, available for Android, iPhone, BlackBerry and Windows Phone; however, VISIT will use Zoom.
WhatsApp	Instant messenger	✓	Yes, for a quick direct communication between a few team-members. But it can be confusingly for a large group of students.
WordPress	Blogging	x / ✓	Could be part of the personal learning environment: Easy to use, students can manage it by themselves.  Not for communication purposes.



YouTube	Social media/video sharing	✓	A huge free learning resource.
Zoom	Communication	✓	Video conferencing with a lot of additional features.

#### 1.4 OIL in VISIT

OIL activities should give a formal or credit-bearing recognition for students in order to strengthen their participation and motivation (Villar-Onrubia & Rajpal 2016, 80). A second motivation factor observed by Villar-Onrubia & Rajpal (2016, 80) is that OIL should be thematically a part of the study program and never an isolated module. This should prevent frustration because students could feel like this is an unnecessary burden for them. Furthermore, there need to be resources for staff mobility so that lecturers can build relationships with future partner universities. Besides financial resources there need to be IT- and pedagogical specialists at the university (Villar-Onrubia und Rajpal 2016, 80). It is essential that the discipline and group-specific factors are taken into account when implementing OIL in the project, since negative outcomes like the reinforcement of stereotypes are a serious risk (Villar-Onrubia und Rajpal 2016, 81). When conceptualizing VISIT all this was taken into account.

Cultural exchange which happens in an OIL project is perfect to apply in touristic purposes. Because the peer groups can be potential tourists on the islands, their opinions and experiences are important factors. Online international learning enables students and companies to get further into the subject matter. The participating universities and businesses could help each other to foster learning.

Since a Google account includes access to Google Drive with Google Docs and also for Hangout, this could be a good combination of collaboration and communication tools. It can be assumed, that most of the students already have Google accounts and if not, it is for free. Critical retrospection should be done continuous in form of group discussions in order to prevent discrepancies during the project via Google Hangout.



## 2 LBD IN INTENSIVE WEEK TEACHING AND WORKSHOPS

The pedagogical aim of VISIT during the Intensive Study Programs (ISP) is to equip the students with skills and knowledge that are relevant in working life. During the ISPs, students work together with teachers and businesses to develop new service ideas in the location of the ISP. Learning by Developing (LbD) is an action model originating from Laurea University of Applied Sciences, and it provides apt opportunities for generating new service ideas and innovations by students working in teams.

In addition to using LbD in student work in VISIT, the consortium employs LbD together with LFA (Logical Framework) in their joint project work.

### 2.1 LbD – Learning by Developing

Learning by Developing (LbD) is a learning and action model that has been used at Laurea University of Applied Sciences since 2006 (Henriksson, Korhakangas and Mantere 2014, 7). According to Raji (2007), the action model implements a development process that derives from project-oriented teaching. There development projects that are linked to working life have adopted elements of research-oriented learning. Later, the development projects have included research which can be understood as a tool to generate new knowledge (Raji 2007).

Learning by Developing (LbD) is founded on “a pragmatic educational philosophy” (Henriksson et al. 2014, 7). Education is part of life and therefore, one should learn in genuine activities in relation to life and one’s environment (Dewey 1984, 443 – 450). According to Dewey, learners make progress depending on how the learners’ new attitudes and interests develop (Henriksson et al. 2014, 7).

The LbD action model shares characteristics with many learning approaches, such as experiential, research-oriented, expansive, problem-based, and constructive learning approaches. A conceptual framework is formed from different learning approaches, and it can be employed to analyze events in conjunction to the learning process (Henriksson et al. 2014, 7). LbD differs from problem-based learning and project-based learning with the “more holistic view of students” it takes compared to a situation with project-based or problem-based focuses (Vyakarnam, Illes, Kolmos and Madritsch 2008, 10). Vyakarnam et al. point out that LbD realizes the opportunity for students to gain research-oriented and social skills while gaining expertise in the studies in the form of knowledge (2008, 10).



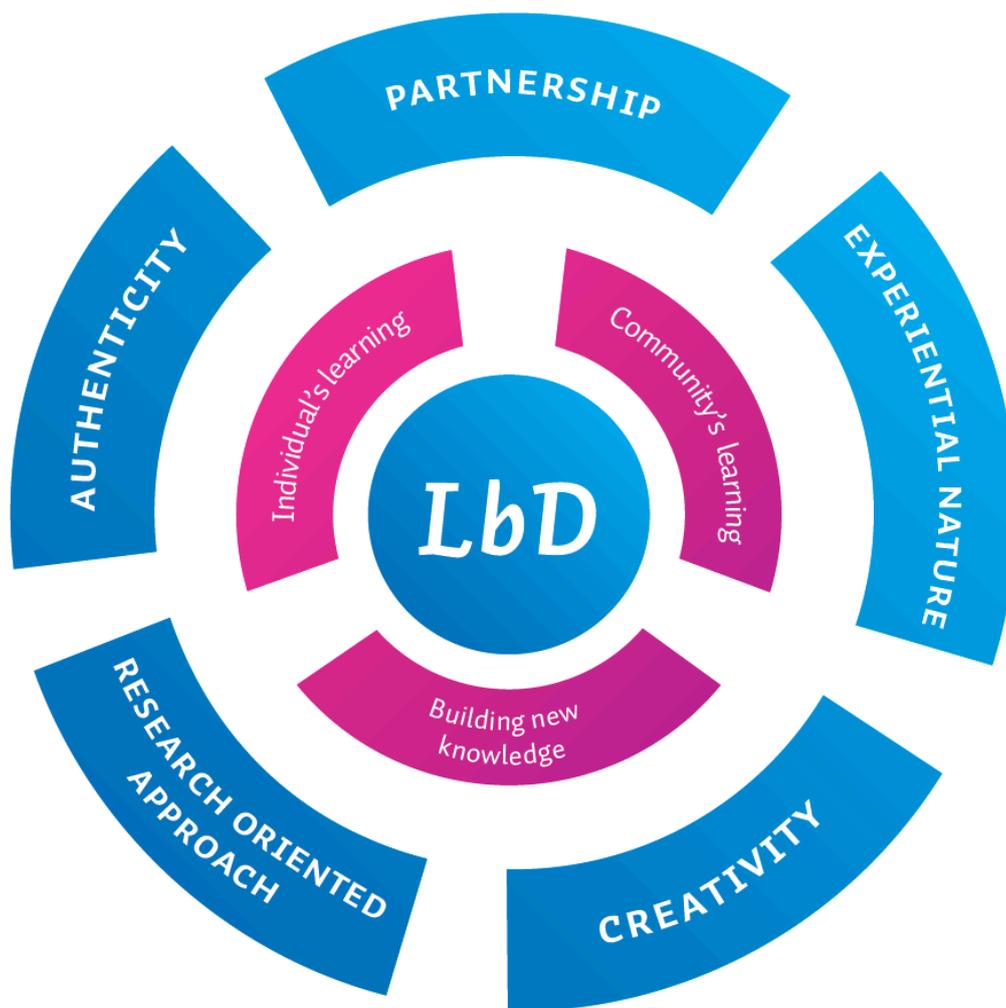


Figure 1. LbD Action Model. Henriksson & al. 2014, 10; Laurea University of Applied Sciences.

Figure 1 shows the learner in the center, with the five dimensions of Learning by Developing forming the learning environment. The dimensions are authenticity, partnership, experiential nature, creativity and research-oriented approach. In this environment, the student in partnership with others, such as the student's team, the client or business representative, and teachers, generates individual's learning and community's learning while building new knowledge.

Authenticity refers to the real development case from the world of work the student will solve in the learning process. Partnership means the team the student works in and the business the case derives from and which creates the problem the student team will tackle, as well as the teachers involved in the learning process. When the different actors cooperate equally, also learning happens (Henriksson et al., 2014, 11). This cooperation generates new knowledge (Henriksson et al., 2014, 11).



Experiential nature allows the student team to experiment in the safe learning environment the higher education institute provides in the learning process. Students experiment to find a solution to the case and might generate a great solution but sometimes students might even fail to do this. What is important is the learning process where either kind of solution generates new knowledge and innovations. Experiential nature is emphasized by the reflective actions of the actors in the process. For example, individuals and teams of both students and those of teachers need to reflect on their work in order to strengthen the learning process of each and every one. Creativity refers to the creative process that takes place in the student work to generate new knowledge and innovations. The research-oriented approach is implemented in teamwork, by researching information and knowledge that is needed to solve the case.

LbD demands different kind of skills and roles from teachers and students than in normal learning processes. Teachers have a mentoring role where they support the students' activities by providing information, theories, methodologies, and guidance regularly. Students take an active role in their learning process, by leading their own work in teams and taking responsibility throughout the learning process.

Teamwork is the core of a project carried out by Learning by Developing. Teachers form a team, and learn how to cooperate and act together, for the benefit of the students and the project(s) they carry out. Students work in teams and learn to work together for joint aims in their project work.

Interactivity is key to a successful implementation of LbD. All partners are interactive, and work carried out results in all participants learning in the learning process.

## 2.2 LbD in VISIT

The key activities of VISIT are linked to five Intensive Study Programs (ISP) which form the core for Research and Development activities and work in the project. The core produces information and new knowledge for the partners to develop further with students of the partner universities and in cooperation with the SMEs and businesses on the islands where the ISPs take place. Therefore, it is important that the ISPs are successful with regard to the learning of students, teachers and businesses during the ISPs.

Learning by Developing is implemented in the ISPs in order to place the student in the center of the activities and in cooperation with businesses and teachers. This is the student's working environment, where all the learning, researching and developing takes place to form new innovations. Students are placed in multinational teams with members representing different study programs and having different kinds of backgrounds. The student teams benefit from the diverse skills present in the teams, because they can utilize the various kinds of skills and knowledge in their development work.



Student teams meet the SME or business they will be working with during the ISP on the first day of the ISP. The business provides the team with information needed to be able to view the business operations with a service developer's perspective, in addition to being able to implement the research-oriented approach and experiential nature of LbD. The business will inform the student team with the facts related to where they need help to generate new services or develop existing ones.

At this point, student teams have knowledge enough to start their learning process that is supported by the teachers in the ISP. Teachers provide students with theories, methodologies, practical workshops to enable the students to learn, develop and innovate. Simultaneously, one needs to understand that learning takes place in a process, in steps, and all the activities are designed to produce new knowledge. Learning by Developing is a model where the steps support each other (Henriksson et al., 2014, 11). It is important in the LbD process to focus on working together and sharing experiences and knowledge (Henriksson et al., 2014, 11). Teachers guide student teams in their work in dialogue with the real environment situated in the world of the business. Continuous support from teachers and peers during the ISP week will help the teams to work efficiently and still be able to learn at a rapid pace.

During the ISP week, student teams meet customers and potential customers of their client, examine the environment, interview people, carry out ethnographic research, and implement many different kinds of Service Design methods to innovate new solutions for the client. Students work in a creative manner and use all their senses in their development process. Near the end of the LbD implementation during the ISP, students still test their results with real customers and have the opportunity to finetune or amend their innovations based on their testing results. At the end, the students present their final results to their client, all students and all teachers. They receive feedback from students, teachers and their client. It is important to also carry out self-evaluation at the end to enable the strengthening of the learning process of each individual.

Each ISP is evaluated by the partners after the ISP is over, in order to analyze the process of working, the students' learning, and the teachers' participation in the learning activities. During the ISP, the teachers monitor and react swiftly to any needs to change action in case this is needed. Crucial for the success of the ISP is a strong will of the teacher team to act as a team and support each other in the mentoring work, as well as to support the learning process of students during the ISP.

### 3 PBL - FOR CASE STUDIES

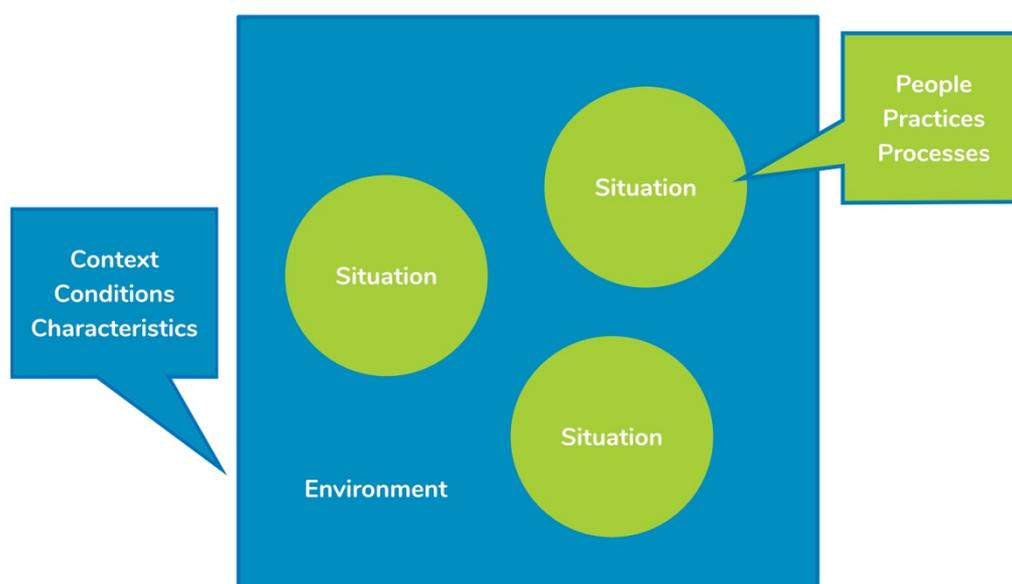
VISIT is a practice oriented, engaging and empowering project built on mobilizing student and instructor creativity for solutions to real world problems. Students and teachers from five different countries team up for five intensive study periods over three years, exploring islands' limitations and opportunities for new services in tourism development. A pedagogical approach that includes problem based learning is well suited to take advantage of and benefit from this diversity of backgrounds, skills, and subject knowledge.

#### 3.1 PBL – Problem-Based Learning

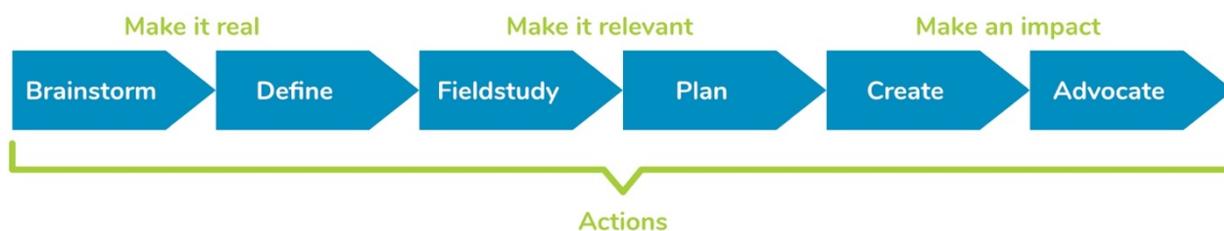
Problem-Based Learning (PBL) has a history that dates back at least to the 1960s (Barrows 1996), when it was first formulated as an approach to integrate student curiosity and perspectives to challenge traditional models of instruction. A basic assumption in the PBL approach is that students are not taught a subject matter or become educated by any external source of superior knowledge. A learning process is instead based on the students' own capacity and commitment to actively engage in dilemmas to find solutions. The role of being a student is reversed from a recipient of knowledge to a person who is processing knowledge, and the instructor role is reformulated from content provider to a role as facilitator and motivator for the students' thinking and engagement (Hung et.al. 2008). PBL is rooted in a constructivist perspective on how knowing and knowledge is created (Savery & Duffy 1995; Marra et. al. 2014). This means that PBL focuses on a relational approach to the learning process, whereby students learn in and with the environment or context in which they interact. Knowledge is created and meaningfully related if that same environment validates the result of the learning process. Does the result have a fulfilling impact on the context? If yes, the learning process has been successful: The students have identified the context, described the situation, defined a problem, elaborated knowledge, animated solutions, and finally operationalized and implemented the results. "The ultimate goal of PBL is to educate students to be self-directed, independent, life-long learners" (Hung et. al. 2008:492), and PBL is a methodology that mimics real-life learning in a coherent and transparent way (Marra et. al. 2014:223).

### 3.2 PBL – The Approach

PBL is best put to use outside classrooms in real-life situations, with student driven teams of 5-6 members (Savery & Duffy 1995; Hung et. al 2008; Kwan 2009). The instructor provides two important inputs to a PBL project: First, the frame-conditions that circumscribe that which is to be explored by the student. This concerns “laying the table” or “setting the stage” to initiate the students to the characteristics that prevail in the area where they are heading. This can be compared to what Savery and Duffy (1995:3) write as the necessity to “anchor all learning activities to a larger task or problem”. It also relates to that the instructor needs to understand that “the contextual setting of knowledge is essential and that meaning making is rooted in the relationships that we construct between ourselves as learners and our surrounding situations” (Marra et. al. 2014:226). Giving context and substance to the environment enables an as rich as possible canvas for the problems that students are set to explore.



The term “problem” is an essential aspect of PBL on the assumption that learning is about resolving a dissonance of what is known and what is discovered in the environment (Marra et. al. 2014:226). Hence, the “problem” lies between the known and the unknown, and it is the instructor’s role to set the students on a course that enables them to unfold this discrepancy. This leads to the second element that the instructor provides, which is the timeline.



Model inspired by <http://learningisopen.org/toolkit/problem-based-learning/>



The instructor introduces the timeline and facilitates the students' work. The timeline is task oriented and each section ends with a peer evaluation that closes the task (Dolmans et. al. 2015:315), and opens up for the next, eg. the "brainstorming" session ends when the group concludes that there are no new aspects of the problem and when they are able to narrow the problem to an operational definition. Each task leads to the next in a student led process facilitated by an instructor. There are loops and feedback in the process that makes it possible to reformulate the problem and reconsider each task due to continuous evaluation. Learning outcomes of single PBL processes and for the results of the overall PBL approach in terms of what kind of knowledge is acquired, is debated in the literature. Kwan (2009:91) summarizes this when she states that the students "learning outcomes emphasise not only content knowledge but also process skills and learning attitudes." VISIT aims to cover these aspects in its learning approach to the Intensive Study Programs.

### 3.3 PBL in VISIT

VISIT hosts five Intensive Study Programs (ISPs) in five different locations over three years. Each HEI partner provides one island location for these one weeklong ISPs. It is an obvious advantage that the project is undertaken in such limited environments. The VISIT project management team, who also participates actively as instructors and facilitators in the ISPs, makes the planning a collaborative effort.

In the ISPs, the 20 students are divided to four intercultural teams with five members in each. Initially, the teams are introduced to the work process timeline and are assigned to a company. The aim is that they by the end of the ISP present a plan for developing new services. It is here the problem is articulated for the students for the first time, which means they are encountering this as a situation for which they have no previous knowledge. They are "cold" in the words of Savery & Duffy (1995:8). Students get short thematic introductory lectures and instructions to context, conditions and characteristics of the environment in which their assigned companies are situated. The companies become learning situations where students interact and co-create with local people, practices and processes, using methodological tools that allow for comprehensive reflections and continuous evaluation of their learning progression along the timeline. Members of the project management team and invited instructors are facilitating the teamwork and are coaching the process. They ensure that the student teams are able to claim ownership over their learning process and safeguard progression throughout the ISP.

Finally, the VISIT approach to PBL is an intensive and condensed version. The literature suggests five to six weeks long PBL projects (Kwan 2009). However, VISIT is privileged with a structured timeline and defined environments as well as a dense social milieu where all ISP participants are involved throughout the weeks. This makes the PBL approach both enabling and worthwhile.



## 4 PD - IN COOPERATION BETWEEN SMES AND STUDENTS

### 4.1 PD – Participatory Development

Participatory Development is a modern shift in development thinking perspective that is based on the works of Paulo Freire (Campbell & Vainio-Mattila, 2003), while it reflects cumulative experience and knowledge gained, by mainly, development NGO's practices (Campbell & Vainio-mattila, 2003; Kapoor, 1998).

In particular it was Jürgen Habermas that developed the notion of the 'public sphere' in which there appears a distinction between the civil and the political society. As far as the former is concerned civil society is a social entity basic characteristic of which is the critical approach of all social phenomena that take place in the domain of the particular society. The elaboration of this theoretical stance started initially as the opportunity of the individuals to participate in the process for the formation or the alteration of the social conditions.

However, this participation involved two basic attributes: i) a corpus of information spread among the members of that society and ii) the existence of a coherent and conscious mass of individuals that enable the exchange of ideas, propositions and aspects in all issues concerning the particular group. It has to be noted here that social consciousness is a top priority in order public sphere to operate within its rational boundaries. The Brazilian thinker Paulo Freire (1976) discusses the concept of 'conscientization' arguing that conscientization operates as the necessary lay ground of an organized mass (or better: a social entity) in order to get common mentality and to conclude to common action. Getting back to Habermas, the idea for the formation of the public sphere goes back to the cafes of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, where the educated elites could exchange their opinions, hence an individual could be heard by the other participants. The fact that the cafes could operate as an unofficial 'podium' where critical discussions could take place provided the ground for the elaboration of the notion of public sphere. In this public sphere are met the basic characteristics of a realm enabling and encouraging critical discussion, a field that comes in contrast with the 'system' which serves the needs and the interests of the dominant group (Chaudhary, Avis, & Munn-Giddings, 2013, p. 64). In the public sphere the free flow of ideas is an imperative prerequisite for it enables both: the participation as well as the esoteric development or a social entropy (a change within).

In these terms, the concept of public sphere has been conceived not just as a discussion forum but moreover a place wherein a frame of social conscience individuals may on the one hand express themselves while on the other may receive advise, help and support.



## 4.2 What is PD?

Defining the term it has been proven a difficult task since there are many different definitions on the subject from the 1970s till now (Campbell & Vainio-Mattila, 2003; Opaluwah, 2016; Vainio-Mattila, 2000). Nonetheless, according to Campbell & Vainio-Mattila (2003) the diversity of the definitions is based on how someone perceives and interprets “participation” and who are the actors that participate. Such examples are the definition of Ghazala & Vijayendra (2011) who refer to «community based development efforts and the decentralization of resources and authority to local governments.» (p.66). Also, the definition from Asian Development Bank (2001) that explains “Participatory development” as “...a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, and the decisions and resources that affect them.” (p.1) Mohan's approach (2001) is more radical and defines Participation as a powerful “...conflictual and, sometimes, violent process whereby the less powerful must struggle for increased control over their lives” (p.4).

The list of definitions is not exhaustive; however, it is indicative of the bottom-to-top approach. This approach is the revolutionary element of Participatory Development, that stretches the need of people to raise their voices and actively participate in the development plans and procedures (Freire, 1970). This need for participation is also very well emphasized in the title of Chambers work (1983) “Putting the Last First”.

## 4.3 Why PD?

There are some distinct advantages when involving people in the development plans that are meant to assist them. The most and acknowledged advantage is that local people have better knowledge, and more information on the native environment framework they are working at. This framework embeds all aspects of the social, environmental and economic local life, making the locals valuable partners (Mohan, 2001; Osmani, 2008). That means that locals have all the crucial information on how where and when a project can be designed, implemented and monitored. So, PD can be more efficient since the project targets to meet local participants’ needs (Oakley, 1991; Vainio-Mattila, 2000).

Another significant advantage of the PD is the motivation of the locals that appears to be stronger, since their participation is an act of empowerment (Campbell & Vainio-mattila, 2003; Opaluwah, 2016), as they can choose the way to participate (Osmani, 2008) and plan for their development.

Participatory Development can lead to more sustainable approach as the local people that are engaged, develop and improve their capabilities supporting this way their own participation in the project and at the same time the sustainability of the project (Oakley, 1991).

Engaging and empowering people to meet their needs can be a practical approach for development however it is not a panacea, as the socioeconomic context is always different, leading to mixed results (Ghazala & Vijayendra, 2011). The methods, the time, the place and whether or not a participatory approach should be used is a matter of careful investigation and consideration.

#### 4.4 PD and Higher Educational Institutes

“The future rests on participatory sustainable development in which higher education institutions have a key role to play.” (UNESCO, 2008, p. 5).

The substantial role of HEI's is emphasised in the 11<sup>th</sup> UNESCO- APEID International Conference on “Reinventing Higher Education: Toward Participatory and Sustainable Development”.

In this context education and Higher Educational Institutes (HEI) can play a vital role in PD as transmitters of knowledge, since educated and informed people are more efficient and supportive on the PD principles and processes (Opaluwah, 2016). Also HEIs can be active members of PD projects by engaging and supporting local projects and initiatives.

The University Kebangsaan in Malaysia and the Community Service Programme (CSP) is such an active engagement example that promotes participatory development through a number of projects. “Activities” programme belong to CSP and is about volunteer students staying in remote areas for one week helping the locals with a variety of tasks, for instance repairing homes and cleaning the area, in between lectures and motivational talks. Also, the “Co-curricular project” (part of the CSP) supports the participatory engagement of students offering one out of two credits for community service (UNESCO, 2008).

University of British Columbia (UBC), had opened an educational office in a downgraded area of Vancouver, where students and academics offer educational programmes, and activities to everyone in the community. Around one thousand students, every year are involved in a reciprocal process in which they help the local community and in return, they experience the results of inequality and lack of resources, a valuable lesson for everyone involved (University of British Columbia, n.d.).

Thus, PD theory is highly associated with education (Opaluwah, 2016) and education with practice as we have seen from the examples above. HEIs must reinvent their role and extend their presence to the society. This trend is stressed by the Talloires Network, at The Talloires Declaration on the Civic Roles and Social Responsibilities of Higher Education (2005), that HEIs “...do not exist in isolation from society, nor from the communities in which are located. Instead, we carry a unique obligation to listen, understand, and contribute to social transformation and development.”(The Talloires Network, 2005).

#### 4.5 PD in VISIT

Five HEIs from five different European countries took under consideration the principles of PD and the values of the Talloires Network Declaration and developed the VISIT project under Erasmus +.

VISIT project is about tackling the effects of tourism seasonality on small islands. The values of Participatory Development, are applied by trying to engage the local stakeholders in acting on their behalf.



This goal is achieved through a three-step process:

### First Step

#### Engagement of the local HEIs and stakeholders.

The local HEI is the one that is engaged and identifies the possible case study (small island) for the project, taking into consideration the one that deals with the worst consequences of the tourism seasonality.

The identification procedure had as a prerequisite the engagement also of a local stakeholder e.g. the municipality, the chamber of commerce etc. to gain that indigenous knowledge of the complex socio-economic context, moreover, to have broader support in the local community.

### Second Step

#### Engagement of the local businesses

In this step and with respect to that indigenous knowledge gained previously, the involvement of the local stakeholders becomes more intense and focuses on specific businesses that are willing to learn and make changes. Four tourism-related businesses are selected to be authentic case studies for our students. These business partners are also willing to offer internships to students ensuring this way an active and reciprocal relationship.

### Third step

#### Engagement of the students

In order to formulate a 'public sphere' domain, we decided to implement a group of already aware individuals to act as multipliers. This is in accordance with the Habermasian logic for, as it has been put in Chaudhay et.al. (2013) within the 'self-help groups'. Thus a group of twenty students from five different countries and cultural backgrounds are selected and visit the islands for one week experiencing first hand the local context and immersing into the local culture.

Communication and co-operation among the students and the businesses is established through regular meetings, while a team of experts in different academic backgrounds offers guidance and inspiration to students to develop the innovative services for the business partners. The outcome of this week is not just presented to the local business partners but also developed and implemented by the VISIT students through an internship.

This three-step process outlines and emphasises the PD approach of the VISIT project where the HEIs are trying actively to involve and apply participatory development by listening, understanding and contributing to the local development.



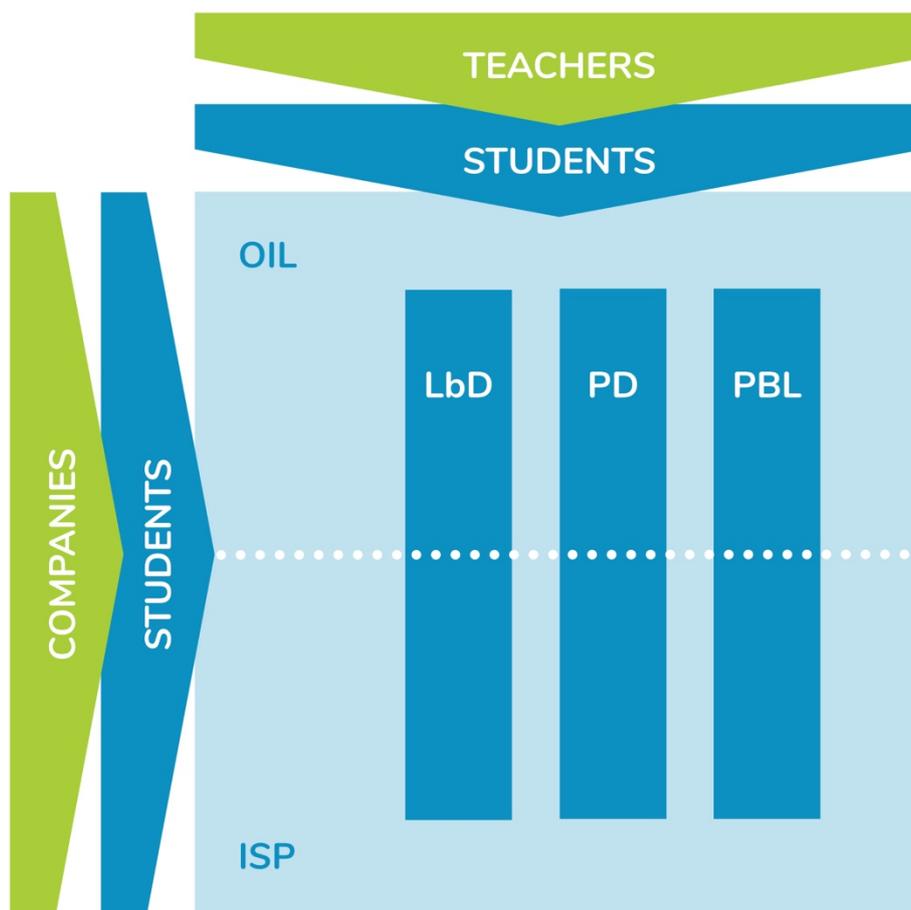
## 5 CONCLUSION

All mentioned models of education for participants OIL, LbD and PD are a good way for included participants to achieve their goals and achieve improvement. It is to all included parties (HEI, students, business) to find a best model that they can use to gain the most of it. Taking part in any of the education models HEI and business company assigns a real business problem that student has to solve. The student is not working alone but is placed in a newly founded team. The team is formed from different individuals that usually had no previous contact and are coming from different countries. HEI and business company provides all information's and the support that student team need to solve a business challenge. Information's are given before and during the education module. It is up to the student team to find the best solution by using all the knowledge that they have acquired during their study period and to explore all options that can help them to solve the assignment. The success of the project will be visible when the business company which is included in the project applies all recommendations or products in its business process and benefits from it, or learns from the project.

We can conclude that:

- Student can learn from actual business cases and that way acquire new knowledge and skills and gain valuable work experience and expertise. By participating in this kind of education students can further develop their competences, knowledge and skills in an international environment. While working on project they will meet new people from different countries and will work in international surrounding;
- Higher Education Institution improves partnership with company from business sector or starts a new partnership. By collaborating with a business company HEI gains an insight into the business company's state of affairs and eventual business challenges. Linking academic theory to specific business cases helps HEI to gain insight into the real market situation, thus enabling students to work on the labor market during their studies. Results (solution) of specific issues can be presented as educational and business cases to current and future students;
- Business Company by collaborating in educational model can gain fresh insights from HEI and students which can lead to solve current issue/challenges and can lead to new perspectives for future development and creation of a new product.





Integration of approaches into VISITS pedagogical framework



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