# Good Practice Examples and Blended Learning Concepts in Teachers´ CPD in Romania

Erasmus+

Blended Learning in Teachers´ Professional Development- Developing a Blended Learning Course in Content Area Literacy for Secondary Teachers (BleTeach)

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This report has been prepared within the Erasmus+ project *Blended Learning in Teachers´ Professional Development - Developing a Blended Learning Course in Content Area Literacy for Secondary Teachers (BleTeach), project no. VG-SPS-NW-15-30-013892,* based upon a common methodology developed within the project.

# Contents

# I.  Introduction

Our research aimed a) to identify the perceptions of continuous professional development (CPD) providers about *what counts as good practice in blended learning* and b) to *make recommendations concerning the essential features of effective blended learning* in CPD that will be transferred to the results of the Blended Learning in Teachers' Professional Development (BleTeach) project.

The leading question of our research is, therefore, "What is CPD training providers' perception about good practice in blended learning?" and, more specifically,

- What are some highly effective combinations of face-to-face and e-learning components within a CPD for learners´ (i.e. teachers´) motivation, interaction and learning outcomes?
- What are the instructional design patterns (learning/teaching scenarios) are used in blended learning courses?
- What are the major success factors in implementing blended learning within CPD?
- What are the major obstacles/ threats and ways of overcoming them in implementing blended learning within CPD?
- In courses that are considered good practice (in terms of blended learning CPD) what kind of evaluation was used?

# II.  Methodology related information (description of how data was collected)

We applied a two-stage methodology, which gradually provided the data that allowed us to provide answers to the specific research questions. In stage 1, the purpose was to identify providers of blended learning courses which the beneficiaries (teachers) deem to be good practice. For this purpose, we translated into Romanian the teacher questionnaire developed by the partnership, and developed a Google Form (survey). We distributed the link to Google Form by email to potential respondents, primarily to members of the *Asociatia Lectura si Scrierea pentru Dezvoltarea Gandirii Critice Romania* (ALSDGC), using the discussion group gandire_critica_revista@yahoogroups.com, but also to other teachers' groups (e.g. listserv used by the Cluj County School Inspectorate). In the interval 7-16 February 2016, 77 responses were provided. Of these, 74 respondents (96.1%) stated that they had participated in blended learning in-service teacher training programmes. Of the 74 respondents who stated that they had participated in such courses, 70 (94.5%) stated they had attended CPD courses that they thought were effectively/ successfully delivered in blended learning mode, and which they identified as good practice.

We analysed the responses focusing primarily on those who stated they had participated in 5 or more blended learning courses (11 respondents), and then on those who stated they had participated in 2-4 courses (43 respondents). If the contact information about the provider was clear for the '5 or more' category, we selected the course to be further investigated. Based on clarity of the contact data (provider institution, name of the trainer(s), website/ email address, etc.), we selected 6 courses. The providers/ trainers named in these six courses were contacted by email in the first half of March 2016, and asked if they would be willing to provide information about the course that had been named as good practice. Of the six providers/ trainers contacted, one did not respond to the email; from another provider, we learned that they in fact have online courses, not blended learning courses. With representatives (trainers) of the other four providers we arranged

interviews. Two interviews were conducted by telephone, one by skype and one face-to-face. The interviewer made notes during the interviews.

## III.   Findings

### III.1. Highly effective combinations of face-to-face and e-learning components within a CPD for learners´ motivation, interaction and learning outcomes

The effectiveness of the combinations of face-to-face and online seems to depend on the topic of the course. The respondents tended to favour, in general, about half the time online, and half the time face-to-face, with arrangements that allow for ample time face-to-face after the online part. According to one respondent, if the topic implies classroom instruction, then demonstration of how to do instruction in the classroom should be done face-to-face, and those types of courses require more face-to-face time than others (e.g. active learning methods are best done by active learning modelled in the training). Otherwise, if the focus is on new concepts to be understood, and there is a significant amount of literature to be read/ reflected on, and demonstration of the new skills does not necessitate a lot of face-to-face time, then a good combination could be 1 fourth face-to-face, and 3 fourths online, provided that in the online part there is good interaction between the trainer and the learners, and among the learners.

### III.2. Instructional design patterns

The overall emerging pattern seems to be that after face-to-face presentation of new concepts, accompanied by some explanation and guided practice, the learners wait for the trainer to set the task, then they carry out the task, upload it on a platform, receive written feedback, then they may redo the task/ improve the product (although it is not clear to what extent they improve the practice), and they at best reflect on their learning.

Therefore, the pattern appears to be (see Fig. 1 below):

- Presentation of a new concept/ theory – explain, show, model (face-to-face)
- Clarification (face-to-face and / or online)
- (Facilitation of) guided practice to apply the new concept/ theory (face-to-face and / or online)
- Carrying out an (authentic) task and documenting it in real work context (face-to-face and / or online)
- Describing how the task was solved and submitting documentation to the trainer for feedback (online)
- Reflecting / acting on feedback received on task description/ documentation, which could mean (partly) repeating the task performance (face-to-face and / or online).

One innovative suggestion for conducting blended learning courses for teachers on topics that relate to instruction, and which, according to the participants' remarks, should require ampler time in face-to-face mode for demonstration/ modelling purposes, was that the participating teachers should be able to allow their peers to see how they manage online tasks, how they moderate/ facilitate online discussions for students on a platform of their own. If this suggestion was taken on board, the pattern would be affected as follows:

- Presentation of a new concept/ theory – explain, show, model (face-to-face)
- Clarification (face-to-face and / or online)
- (Facilitation of) guided practice to apply the new concept/ theory (face-to-face and / or online)
- Carrying out an (authentic) task, documenting it, and allowing peers and trainer to observe performance and learners' response to performance of task (online);
- Reflecting / acting on feedback received on task description/ documentation, which could mean (partly) repeating the task performance (face-to-face and / or online).
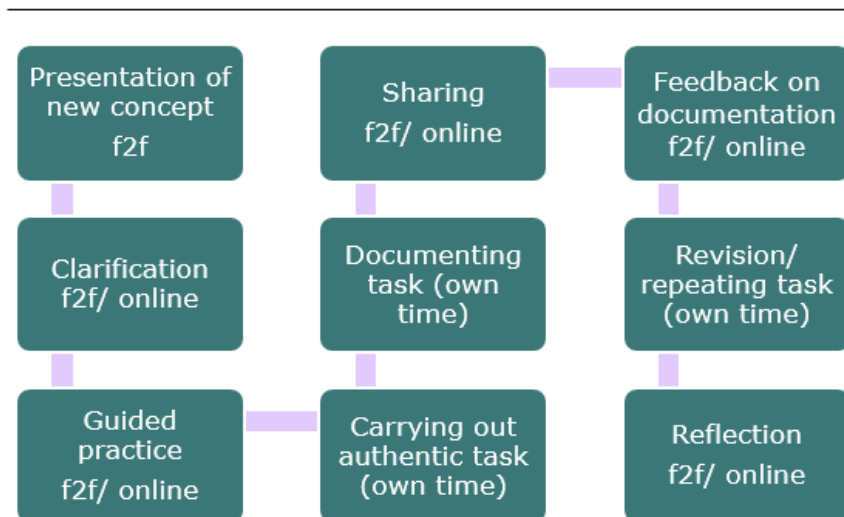
## Instructional design pattern

| Presentation of new concept f2f | Sharing f2f/ online | Feedback on documentation f2f/ online |
|---|---|---|
| Clarification f2f/ online | Documenting task (own time) | Revision/ repeating task (own time) |
| Guided practice f2f/ online | Carrying out authentic task (own time) | Reflection f2f/ online |

*Fig. 1. Proposed instructional design pattern*

## III.3. Success factors

Analysing the answers to question 3 in the teacher survey (Which from the list below are the characteristics of a successful blended learning CPD?), we have found that the most appreciated feature of a successful blended learning course appears to be that ***the learners are offered support for using the e-platform*** (see Table 1). This aspect may be influenced by the fact that the respondents are not very confident users of the platform, and it might implicitly mean that not being able to properly use the platform is the biggest obstacle. We can, however, also speculate, in the given cultural context, that such appreciation of the e-platform was due, as the trainers also pointed out, to very prompt support in case of technical glitches. The importance of a ***user-friendly, simple, straightforward interface*** ('not like Moodle', as one of the trainers pointed out) was also underscored. In addition, the fact that ***the trainer could personalize some of the settings on the platform*** was also mentioned as a success factor relative to the platform.

Over three quarters of the surveyed learners also acknowledge ***the importance of a wide range of resources and support*** (see Table 1), an aspect which was also pointed out by the trainers interviewed, who added as a strength that the trainees appreciated having ample time to cover the reading assigned.

***Individual feedback on the learners' performance*** either during or after completion of an authentic task also appears to be widely considered as a success factor by three quarters of the surveyed teachers (see Table 1). The interviewed trainers also added that ***feedback could lead to repetition of***

*the task for improved performance*, although it was not clear whether the learners had to redo the entire task or simply document it more thoroughly.

While over two thirds of the surveyed teachers considered it a success factor that *the trainees' interaction and engagement are facilitated by online communication and networking channels* (see Table 1), the interviewed trainers did not perceive this as a success factor. In fact, there was little, if any, interaction on a forum or chatrooms in the courses that the trainers described. As a perceived success factor, they mentioned their availability for extra clarifications by telephone and email, which the participants appreciated and took advantage of, but not on the e-learning platform; rather than with groups of learners, this type of interaction happened between individual learners and the trainer.

Around two thirds of the surveyed teachers consider that *successful blended learning courses accommodate diverse learning styles* and, more broadly, *diverse needs* (see Table 1). This aspect is confirmed by the interviewed trainers, who pointed out that of their learners, roughly equal shares preferred the face-to-face and the online parts; as for diverse needs, the option given to the learners to *choose the task* they wanted to work on from a list of option was pointed out as a strength of the blended learning course.

It should not be surprising that a significant share (two thirds) of the surveyed teachers think that *successful blended learning courses encourage more participation than in face-to-face training* (see Table 1). However, if we use this feature to judge whether the courses described by the interviewed trained were good practice or not, then we could conclude that they were not. On the other hand, it may be that the learners perceived the thorough individual feedback from the trainer as a valuable form of interaction, which may not (quite probably) be possible in face-to-face sessions.

| Q3. Which from the list below are the characteristics of a successful blended learning CPD?) (choose as many as you find relevant) | No. responses | % |
|---|---|---|
| Support for using the e-platform is offered | 62 | 83.8 |
| Trainees have access to a wide range of quality resources and support | 57 | 77.0 |
| Trainees get individual feedback on their performance as part of doing the activity or following completion of the activity | 56 | 75.7 |
| Trainees' interaction and engagement are facilitated by online communication and networking channels | 51 | 68.9 |
| Accommodates diverse learning styles | 50 | 67.6 |
| Accommodates diverse needs | 50 | 67.6 |
| Encourages more participation than in face-to-face training | 49 | 66.2 |
| Other | 1 | 1.4 |

*Table 1. Characteristics of a successful blended learning course. (% relative to respondents who participated in blended learning courses n=74)*

Other success factors mentioned were time and deadline related issues: a) *blended learning courses save time* otherwise spent away from home; b) the fact that the task can be *set a firm deadline*,

after which there is no possibility to upload work helped the learners to submit their work in a timely manner.

The human factor, not lastly, is also considered a success factor: ***highly motivated learners*** will be successful regardless of the mode of training delivery.

**Financial aspects** of participation in the course, while pointed out by the trainers as strong motivators, do not relate directly to the blended learning nature of the course, and should be interpreted in the socio-cultural context of the country.

## III.4. Major obstacles

The perceived obstacles, as expected, are relative to ICT skill mastery of the learners and the technical aspects of accessibility of the e-platforms.

To compensate for modest ICT skills, learners can rely on colleagues in their proximity, and on the trainer in the face-to-face component. In fact, blended learning courses seem to be a good real-life application of and opportunity to develop ICT skills which did not get to be developed enough in courses which targeted precisely the mastery of those skills.

Prompt, even around-the-clock technical assistance can be of help in case of technical glitches (e.g. when the platform does not operate properly).

## III.5. Evaluation

In terms of evaluation, good practice seems to imply ***good formative assessment***, ***ample monitoring and of constructive/ corrective feedback***. The interviewed trainers experienced mostly face-to-face summative assessment, which allowed the learners to share and reflect on their learning experiences, so to a large extent ***the authenticity of the evaluation tasks seems to impact the validity of the evaluation results***.

# IV.   Conclusions and recommendations

In conclusion, for a successful blended learning course, i**t depends on the objectives and the topic of the course what ratio of face-to-face vs online time to allocate**; the favoured instructional design should include a part whereby the learners get to **share/ reveal/ show their practical approach as authentically as possible**; the **aspects identified in the survey as success factors** of a blended learning course seem to be essential, and few others are mentioned, perhaps with the notable exception of the obvious **time-related factor**; **obstacles relate to ICT skills and technical aspects of the platform**; **evaluation seems to be best done face-to-face** for ample and direct sharing of learning experiences.

Therefore, for a successful blended learning course, BleTeach course developers should take into account the above findings, and especially the following **recommendations**:

- for timely completion of the online tasks, time allocation should be considered carefully, but deadlines should be handled firmly;

- ensure that there is a forum / chatroom function of the platform that is moderated, and where trainers encourage participants' interaction, including perhaps by assigning specific roles for specific learners;

- whether in the online or in the face-to-face component, allow the participants to share their practices in as authentic a context as possible (ideally, show how they work in the classroom, and not just self-reports on their practice);

- ensure prompt technical support;

- invest time in the beginning of the course to make sure that participants can use the platform;

- develop a user-friendly interface, which is not cluttered, and which allows easy orientation;

- have trainers provide ample, specific constructive feedback, which should allow repetition of the task (not just adjustments to the task description);

- introduce hard-to-grasp, highly unfamiliar concepts in face-to-face meetings for easy of prompt clarification;

- conduct face-to-face final evaluation for clear communication/ observation of learning outcomes.

# V.   Annexes

## V.1. Annex 1

| | |
|---|---|
| Blended learning CPD course (title) | Innovative ICT tools for enhanced qualifications and career development of school psychologists and counsellors |
| General information about the course provider | |
| Full name | Cognitrom, in partnership with the Romanian Psychologists' Association; the Romanian Association of Cognitive Sciences |
| Address | Cluj-Napoca |
| Web address | www.cognitrom.ro; |
| Interviewee | M. C., trainer, psychologist |
| Email address/ phone number | office@cognitrom.ro; |
| Detailed description of the blended learning CPD course | |
| Information about the trainees (e.g. subjects taught, familiarity with ICT, group size) | The trainees were school psychologists and counsellors. Their ICT skills were appropriate/good/ very good. The groups had around 18-20 participants. |
| Description of the course (topic, learning objectives, instructional design patterns, ratio face-to-face vs online, methods, etc.) | The topics were:<br>- (Computer-based) psychological assessment of children and adolescents;<br>- Diagnosis, prevention and intervention in attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders (ADHD);<br>- Diagnosis, intervention and prevention of anxiety in children and adolescents;<br>- Using ICT in assessing and promoting mental health in children and adolescents<br>The participants were expected to develop advanced competences in:<br>- computer-based screening and evaluation of children and adolescents (3-18 years);<br>- diagnosis, prevention and intervention in ADHD and anxiety disorders, the most frequent psycho-behavioural issues in children and adolescents;<br>- using new digital technologies in mental health.<br>The face-to-face – online ratio was 1:1 (4 modules each of 18 hours face-to-face; 18 hours online). |
| Trainees' motivation | The trainees were highly motivated because the issues were new and very important for the participants' professional development needs. In addition, all costs of the course were covered by the providers, including a per diem, as this course was provided within a SOP HRD project (POSDRU/57/1.3/S/36217). |
| Trainees' interaction (with the content, with their peers, with him/herself) | The trainees interacted with each other very well in the face-to-face components; in the online part, they were expected to develop and upload tasks assigned (reading, practical tasks; reflections), on which the trainers provided feedback. The face-to-face part was used for the theoretical part and for clarifying concepts, so interaction was primarily defined by needs: those who needed more explanation or elaboration asked questions and received answers immediately. In the online part, they had to have |

| | interventions, write them up in case studies, and upload them for feedback. |
|---|---|
| Learning outcomes (targeted and achieved) | The learning outcomes were achieved; it was a positive thing that the participants had plenty of time to cover the reading topics in their own time, and to try to apply what they learned in their daily work. |
| Evaluation of the participants' learning (methodology and results) | The participants were assessed by means of the products that resulted from the practical application of the new skills developed and the new tools, and in individual interviews. |
| Evaluation of the course (methodology and results) | The course achieved its objectives. The trainers were pleased with the participants' learning/ progress. The participants found that their learning is very helpful for their professional work as school psychologists.<br>The participants were asked for feedback, and their evaluations were very good. They were satisfied with the blended-learning mode of delivery, because it saved them time (they did not have to travel so much; some of the participants had to travel and stay in a hotel for the face-to-face component). |
| Success factors (perceived) | Highly motivated participants, who worked very well and progressed professionally. The technical part (platform) was easy to use; the participants used the technology confidently. They were pleased with the written feedback they received on the platform, which was detailed and constructive, highly relevant for the practical work of the participants. |
| Obstacles/ challenges and ways of overcoming (if that is the case) | No obstacles were perceived by the trainer, or pointed out by the trainees relative to the blended learning mode. |

## V.2. Annex 2

| Blended learning CPD course (title) | Evaluation of communication competences (EVRO) |
|---|---|
| General information about the course provider | |
| Full name | Babes-Bolyai University, the Faculty of Letters, Cluj-Napoca |
| Address | Cluj-Napoca |
| Web address | http://evro.didacticalimbiiromane.ro/ |
| Interviewee | A.U., trainer |
| Detailed description of the blended learning CPD course | |
| Information about the trainees (e.g. subjects taught, familiarity with ICT, group size) | The trainees were primary school teachers and teachers of Romanian language and literature (secondary school). Their ICT skills were varied, but they helped each other, and the technical support was very prompt. There groups had around 12-18 participants each, who stayed together as a group throughout the course, with the same online trainer and a different face-to-face trainer. |
| Description of the course (topic, learning objectives, instructional design patterns, ratio face-to-face vs online, methods, etc.) | The major topics were: Evaluation of oral and written communication skills in primary/ secondary education; use of ICT for the assessment of communication skills. The participants were expected to develop competences in the field of evaluation of written and oral assessment of their students' communication skills: to develop relevant assessment tools (similar to PISA/ PIRLS) |

| | and use them, to use rubrics for evaluation, to use ICT tools for the assessment of communication, etc. |
|---|---|
| | The entire course was around 100 hours; the face-to-face- online ratio was approximately 2:3 (the trainer is not very certain, as she did not have a part in developing the curriculum). The online part was between the face-to-face meetings. The face-to-face sessions were used for introduction of topics, for explanations and guided practice; in the online sessions, the participants had to carry out various tasks (e.g. develop assessment instruments; tasks for learners, identify/ develop text for purposes of assessment of oral and written communication skills, etc.) and upload their documents on the platform. The trainer often provided very thorough feedback on every aspect of the documents uploaded (including on spelling) as the assessment instruments were then used in class, and reflections were shared on the platform. |
| Trainees' motivation | The trainees were highly motivated especially in the face-to-face sessions: the issues discussed are very important, given the national assessments in the 2nd, 4th and 6th grades, plus the national examinations in the 8th and 12th grades. Competence development is still not very well understood by the teachers, so a lot of work was needed. In addition, the participants had a subsidy (grant) to participate in the course; they were very carefully selected, and their subsidy was tied to very good compliance with the requests / tasks set by the trainers (this course was provided within a SOP HRD project entitled 'Continuous professional development for teachers of Romanian language in pre-university education with a view to developing students' communication competences' - POSDRU/157/1.3/S/133900). They worked hard and were on time with their tasks in the online part, but their motivation was only visible in the output of their work. They were generally on time with their tasks, because the trainer would close the platform (there was a function by which you could define the time for the task, and those who were late could not upload their work, so they risked being dismissed from the course, and losing the subsidy/having to pay back the grant). |
| Trainees' interaction (with the content, with their peers, with him/herself) | The trainees interacted with each other very well in the face-to-face components; highly active and engaging training strategies were used from the RWCT programme. In the online part, they could look at what the others uploaded, but the forum function was not much used. However, sometimes the participants wrote emails or phoned the trainer. The learners were expected to upload tasks assigned, on which the trainers provided feedback, so interaction was primarily with the trainer in written form. |
| Learning outcomes (targeted and achieved) | The learning outcomes were achieved; the participants progressed very much in their skills to develop and implement assessments for their students. The course was highly appreciated. |
| Evaluation of the participants' learning (methodology and results) | The participants were assessed mostly by means of the products that resulted from the practical applications of the new skills developed and the new tools, and in individual interviews. They had an online portfolio, and also a final face-to-face evaluation, |

| | where they had to present one aspect of their learning (of their choice). |
|---|---|
| Evaluation of the course (methodology and results) | The course achieved its objectives. The trainers were pleased with the participants' learning/ progress. The trainers and the participants still keep in touch, and share professional successes or address questions.<br>The participants were given a feedback form at the end of the course, and they pointed out that what was not clarified at the course was clarified by the ample feedback the trainers gave to the participants in writing during the online part. |
| Success factors (perceived) | - highly engaged participants, who worked very hard;<br>- very good relationship established in the face-to-face component among the participants, and between them and the trainers;<br>- the fact that communication between face-to-face meetings could also be doubled by email or telephone calls;<br>- technical assistance was very good if there was some difficulty with the platform;<br>- the fact that the trainer could personalize some of the settings on the platform.<br>- the financial aspect was also a strong motivator; |
| Obstacles/ challenges and ways of overcoming (if that is the case) | The obstacles were mostly related to the participants' ability to use a computer for editing text. They had completed computer courses, but they still found it hard to use some of the functions of Microsoft Word, so they had to have help (mostly from each other, or from the trainer by telephone). |

## V.3. Annex 3

| Blended learning CPD course (title) | Quality management in education |
|---|---|
| General information about the course provider | |
| Full name | "Grigore Tabacaru" Teacher Training House (TTH) Bacau |
| Address | Bacau |
| Web address | http://www.ccdbacau.ro:8080/ec1/curs1/managementul-calitatii-in-educatie |
| Interviewee | M.C., trainer |
| Detailed description of the blended learning CPD course | |
| Information about the trainees (e.g. subjects taught, familiarity with ICT, group size) | The trainees were all categories of teachers in pre-university education, but mostly school principals and members of the school Council for Evaluation and Quality Assurance. Their ICT skills were self-judged; they enrolled on the platform of the TTH, so if they could do that, then it was thought that they had enough ICT skills to participate in the blended learning course. The groups had around 20-25 participants. |
| Description of the course (topic, learning objectives, instructional design patterns, ratio face-to-face vs online, methods, etc.) | The topics were:<br>- Internal quality assurance of the school and conducting internal evaluation;<br>- Accreditation documents;<br>- How to prepare for external evaluation;<br>- Role and responsibilities of CEQA members<br>The participants were expected to develop advanced competences in planning and implementation of an education quality |

| | management system in pre-university education to provide quality services, based on the needs of the learners and of the knowledge-based society. |
| | The face-to-face – online ratio was about 2:1 (around 40-45 hours face-to-face, and around 20 hours online and for the final evaluation). |
| Trainees' motivation | The trainees were motivated because the course was closely related to what they have to do in the CEQA; they had to do observations in preparation for ARACIP evaluations (external evaluation). At that time, the topic was new and people did not know how to do internal quality management and evaluation. Many of the trainees, whose ICT skills were good (somewhat over half) were delighted at the opportunity to attend a blended learning course (and save time), but there were also other participants who did not appreciate the blended learning. |
| Trainees' interaction (with the content, with their peers, with him/herself) | The trainees interacted with each other very well in the face-to-face component; for instance, they had to practice writing feedback for the parents, and they did that together, and enjoyed working together. Everything that they had to include in their evaluation portfolios could be done together. However, on the platform they could not interact, there was no such function. They just uploaded the pieces in their portfolios. However, they could send emails if they chose to. |
| Learning outcomes (targeted and achieved) | The learning outcomes were achieved; it was a positive thing that the course could be adjusted very well to the participants' learning needs. They all progressed, and they managed to understand the key issues, and proved that they could apply them in their school-based activities. |
| Evaluation of the participants' learning (methodology and results) | The course was accredited (25 credits) so the evaluation was done according to the requirements of the official methodology. The participants were assessed by means of the products that resulted from the practical application of the new skills, and which were included in their portfolios. The participants also took a written test, and were asked to provide feedback to the course provider. The course had to have a final face-to-face evaluation in front of a commission set up for this purpose, where they had to share a piece of the portfolio of their choice. |
| Evaluation of the course (methodology and results) | The course was successful. The trainers were pleased with the participants' results. Their feedback collected at the end of the course was mostly very good. Those who had good ICT skills appreciated the flexibility of time, the fact that they could work from home. They preferred this form of organisation. |
| Success factors (perceived) | - the course was delivered in blended learning format – a plus in terms of time invested in covering it from home;<br>- the content of the course was very much appreciated; |
| Obstacles/ challenges and ways of overcoming (if that is the case) | Obstacles pertained to the participants' ability to use computers and to the availability and quality of the Internet connection. According to the trainer, the fact that the forum function could not be used then was an obstacle, but since then, the institution has changed its practices, and the more recently developed courses have the forum function included. |

## V.4. Annex 4

| Blended learning CPD course (title) | Planning, organisation and assessment of instruction |
|---|---|
| General information about the course provider | |
| Full name | Babes-Bolyai University; Asociatia Learn&Vision |
| Address | Cluj-Napoca |
| Web address | http://lmg.ttv.ubbcluj.ro/cursuri/lectie/prezentare-program-pg2/ |
| Interviewee | M.P., trainer |
| Detailed description of the blended learning CPD course | |
| Information about the trainees (e.g. subjects taught, familiarity with ICT, group size) | The course was for teachers in pre-university education, but this specific group consisted mostly of teachers in special education (employees of the Resource Centre for Inclusive education, or of the County Resource Centre for Educational Assistance). Their ICT skills were quite good. The group had around 25 participants. |
| Description of the course (topic, learning objectives, instructional design patterns, ratio face-to-face vs online, methods, etc.) | The topics were from the area of pedagogy and didactics: curriculum, instruction, assessment; didactics; investigating the students' personality and knowing the group of students; school-based curriculum; individual learning plans; behavioural change techniques, enhancing communication skills, school-family partnership. The participants were expected to develop a range of teacher competences.<br>The face-to-face – online ratio was 1:1 (the total duration of the course was 120 hours). In the beginning, there were 5 meetings of approximately 6-10 hours each, then the online section, and then the final evaluation (which was done face-to-face). The methods used in the face-to-face component were mostly group work and interactive approaches; think-pair-share, brainstorming, gallery tour were often used. |
| Trainees' motivation | The trainees were highly motivated including financially (they received a grant to participate in the course), especially for the face-to-face part. The issues were also much appreciated, they were eager learners. In the online section, they uploaded their tasks / products on the platform in good time. The trainer would give them feedback/ make suggestions for improvement, and grade them, and if the participants wanted to get a better grade, they had an interval to improve their product/ portfolio, which many did. They were also motivated that they could to some extent choose the tasks they preferred to carry out; they chose quite different tasks, which was a nice surprise for the trainer, as all the tasks were covered by some participants. |
| Trainees' interaction (with the content, with their peers, with him/herself) | The trainees interacted with each other very well in the face-to-face components. Some of the participants were from the same school, and they could interact face-to-face even when they were carrying out their practical work, and preparing to upload them on the platform. In the e-learning, however, they did not interact; there was a forum function, but it did not get used. There was no set time for the participants when they had to be online. The learners could see how the other learners had performed their task if they chose to do so. In the online, therefore, interaction was mostly between the individual learners and the trainer. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Learning outcomes (targeted and achieved) | The learning outcomes were achieved; the competences to develop were numerous. |
| Evaluation of the participants' learning (methodology and results) | The teachers had to prepare a portfolio with different pieces to prove that they had understood and were prepared to apply their learning. The pieces of the portfolio were uploaded gradually on the platform. They were graded by the trainers, and if the learners were not pleased with the grade, they could improve their product according to the trainer's feedback, and resubmit it for grading. For the final evaluation, there was a commission which included also individuals who were not trainers; the members of the commission engaged in a dialog with the teachers, asking about their classroom experiences using their learning from the course, and – for instance – one of the members of the commission (a university lecturer) remarked with admiration on how well the teachers mastered new teaching strategies. |
| Evaluation of the course (methodology and results) | The course achieved its objectives. The trainer was pleased with the participants' learning, and their way of engaging in dialog with the final evaluation commission. During the face-to-face part, the trainer monitored the learners' progress by asking them to write exit cards at the end of each training day.<br>The final questionnaire also had questions about the platform, the number of hours; it resulted that the participants did not approve of the very many hours allocated for the online part of the training, but they enjoyed the face-to-face part very much. They also appreciated the readings they received (course support), and the recommended literature. |
| Success factors (perceived) | The course was alright ('ok', to quote the trainer). The success factors were that there was a deadline by which the learners had to post their work/ tasks, and that they could get written feedback, and if they wanted, they could improve their work. There were some issues with the platform, but the technical assistance was very good.<br>The platform was user-friendly, very straightforward; there was a 'café' function (chatroom). The interface is an important success factor – easy access, without a lot of time wasted on finding where to post/ upload things. |
| Obstacles/ challenges and ways of overcoming (if that is the case) | The platform did not always work properly. There were too many hours allocated for the online part. If the trainer could choose, she would have more face-to-face hours after the online part, not just the final evaluation, so that the learners can ask questions and receive answers immediately. |

**Aim of the research**

Our research aims to identify CPD providers perceptions about good practice in blended learning and to make recommendations concerning the essential features of effective blended learning in CPD that will transferred to BleTeach.

**The main question of the research** is:

1. What is the (CPD) training provider's perception about good practice in blended learning?

More specifically,

- What are some highly effective combinations of face-to-face and e-learning components within a CPD for learners´ (i.e. teachers´) motivation, interaction and learning outcomes?
- What are the instructional design patterns (learning/teaching scenarios) are used in blended learning courses?
- What are the major success factors in implementing blended learning within CPD?
- What are the major obstacles/ threats and ways of overcoming them in implementing blended learning within CPD?
- In courses that are considered good practice (in terms of blended learning CPD) what kind of evaluation was used?

**Research design**

**Stage 1: Identification of 4-5 CPD blended learning courses**

At the end of this stage, each partner organization will have a list 4-5 CPD blended learning courses delivered in their respective countries which are considered good practice (by a participant-teacher, a researcher, an educational authority)

The blended learning courses will be identified by title of course, provider, contact persons, contact details (see table below).

| Title of the course | Who recommends it (category: participant teacher/ researcher/ educational authority) | Provider | Contact person | Contact details |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

**Approach**

There are 2 approaches to identifying good practice CPD blended learning courses: survey among teachers (by means of online questionnaire) and desktop research.

**Survey among teachers -** online questionnaire for teachers (to be sent to 30-40 teachers)

1. Have you attended any blended learning CPD?

   a. Yes
   b. No (if 'no' – exit)

2. How many blended learning CPD courses have you attended in your teaching career?

   a. 1
   b. 2-4
   c. 5 or more

3. Which from the list below are the characteristics of a successful blended learning CPD? (choose as many as you find relevant)

   - Trainees get Individual feedback on their performance as part of doing the activity or following completion of the activity
   - Support for using the e-platform is offered
   - Accommodates diverse learning styles
   - Accommodates diverse needs
   - Encourages more participation than in face-to-face training
   - Trainee's' interaction and engagement are facilitated by online communication and networking channels
   - Trainees have access to a wide range of quality resources and support
   - Other (please name it)

4. Have you had any effective/ successful blended learning CPD experience which you would identify as good practice?

   a. Yes. Please write the name of the course and the provider.
   b. No.

**Desktop research** – search for descriptions of good practices in CPD blended learning courses as described in scholarly articles/ research reports, etc.

**Stage 2: Interviews with providers/ trainers of the blended learning CPD courses identified in Stage 1**

At the end of this stage the researchers will be able to answer the main question of the research (each one of the secondary questions) based on the information provided by the interviewees.

The information collected will be synthesized in the table below:

| Blended learning CPD course (title) | *See information obtained in stage 1* |
|---|---|
| General information about the course provider | |
| Full name | *See information obtained in stage 1* |
| Address | *See information obtained in stage 1* |
| Web address | *See information obtained in stage 1* |
| Interviewee | |
| Email address/ phone number | |
| Detailed description of the blended learning CPD course | |
| Information about the trainees (e.g. subjects taught, familiarity with ICT, group size) | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Description of the course (topic, learning objectives, instructional design patterns, ratio face-to-face vs online, methods, etc.) | |
| Trainees' motivation | |
| Trainees' interaction (with the content, with their peers, with him/herself) | |
| Learning outcomes (targeted and achieved) | |
| Evaluation of the participants' learning (methodology and results) | |
| Evaluation of the course (methodology and results) | |
| Success factors (perceived) | |
| Obstacles/ challenges and ways of overcoming (if that is the case) | |

**Interview guidelines**

The interview will be conducted face-to-face, by phone, Skype, etc. (orally). The interview should focus on the course that was identified as good practice (in stage 1).

1. Please describe the participants in the course (subjects taught, familiarity with ICT, group size, geographical proximity to the course venue, teaching experience, etc.).

2. Please describe the course (topic, learning objectives, instructional pattern design, and methods).

3. What is the ratio of face-to-face and e-learning components? How did you choose this ratio? Was it effective? Why?

4. On a 1-5 scale (1 – low, 5 – very high), how would you rate the teachers' motivation to participate in the face-to-face sessions? Please explain.

5. On a 1-5 scale (1 – low, 5 – very high), how would you rate the teachers' motivation to participate in the e-learning activities? Please explain.

6. On a 1-5 scale (1 – low, 5 – very high), how would you rate the teachers' interaction (with content and/ with peers) in the face-to-face session? Please explain.

7. On a 1-5 scale (1 – low, 5 – very high), how would you rate the teachers' interaction with (content and/ with peers)  in the e-learning activities? Please explain.

8. How did you organize (instructional design) the blended learning course for reaching the learning outcomes? To what extent were they reached? Please explain.

9. Did you evaluate the participants' learning? If yes, please shortly describe the evaluation methodology and results.

10. Did you evaluate the blended learning course? If yes, please shortly describe the evaluation methodology and results.

11. Was the blended learning CPD course a successful experience? What made it successful?

12. What were the obstacles in delivering the blended learning course? How did you overcome them?

13. In conclusion, would this course a good practice? Please explain.

Add any other questions to make sure that you have data to fill in the table above.

**Structure of the national report**

1. Methodology related information (description of how data was collected)

2. Findings – answers to the specific research questions: highly effective combinations of face-to-face and e-learning components within a CPD for learners´ (i.e. teachers´) motivation, interaction and learning outcomes, instructional design patterns, success factors, major obstacles, evaluation.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

4. Annexes (stage 2 tables)