

FOREWORD -----

After the second annual conference in Amsterdam (outcomes and recommendations in annex 1) a group with members of CHAIN5 has worked hard on writing a possible application for a project under Erasmus+. But due to unforeseen difficulties in completing the application and after having noticed that we need a more specific approach for a project (we were thinking of using a number of themes, but a certain kind of 'focus' will be necessary). So, there was no guarantee for an application that will get 'high grades' by the experts.

But we have also noticed that two other applications have been submitted, in Germany and Italy, with themes that are related to level 5 developments: 'HVET/SCHE and flexibility' and 'Work-based learning'. So, if they are approved we can use these projects, also for CHAIN5 as a 'shadow partner'. We will keep everyone updated about these initiatives.

This newsletter is meant to inform our members about issues like the next conference, short cycle in the EHEA and of course the outcomes of the event in Amsterdam as CHAIN5. Please, take some time to read 'everything' - and send us also articles, documents and reports about 'level 5' if you think that they will be important for other members. We can put them on the website and we can mention them in the next newsletter (perhaps with a link to an external website).

CONTENT -----

Foreword	1
Content	1
Next annual conference in Denmark	1
Short Cycle in the EHEA	1
Outcomes community meeting and annual conference in Amsterdam	2
Crowd research level 5 – an update	2
International seminar 25-26 June in Amsterdam	3
Seminar Amsterdam: TCA on permeability VET-Higher Education	4
Facebook and LinkedIn	4
VET4EU2	4
Transfer from Community Colleges to 4-Year-Colleges...	5
Annex 1: Outcomes of the events in Amsterdam	6
Annex 2: Internet article about transfer from CC's to Universities in the USA	15

NEXT ANNUAL CONFERENCE CHAIN5 IN DENMARK -----

The third annual conference for CHAIN5 will be held in Aalborg, Denmark. The event will be hosted by the Aalborg CHAIN5 Consortium – so, thanks to them for the willingness to give us as members and other interested participants on the 25th and 26th of February 2016 the possibility to make up our minds about the state of play concerning level 5. As you have noticed there are many events organized at the moment, so there is a lot to talk about.

SHORT CYCLE IN THE EHEA --- ! -----

Important news – as already announced in Amsterdam – is the fact that the Short Cycle qualification will be a formal and overall recognized level (cycle) in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The ministers for HE will commit themselves to that in Yerevan, having their meeting as part of the Bologna Process, on the 13th and 14th of May.

In the most recent draft of the communique this is said about this issue: '... to include short cycle qualifications in the overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education

Area (QF-EHEA), based on the Dublin descriptors for short cycle qualifications and quality assured according to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG).'

This means that countries in the Bologna Process from now can take without any hesitation the necessary measures – if there is no SCHE at the moment in the national HEA – for introducing such a cycle. But there has to be taken an extra decision about linking this qualification to the national qualifications framework, with an equivalent to level 5 of the EQF. In most countries level 5 and SCHE have compatible descriptors, but it is still a matter of mixing the NQF (and EQF) and the QF-EHEA.

And then about the name... It was also discussed in Amsterdam, and most of the participants were in favor of the name 'Associate'. This would mean that we will have the following common names for the four cycles in higher education:

- Associate
- Bachelor
- Master
- Doctorate.

Of course every country is free is using its own names, in the national setting. But in the international correspondence these common names can be helpful for understanding each other...

OUTCOMES COMMUNITY MEETING AND ANNUAL CONFERENCE -----

In annex 1 you can find the minutes of the 'community meeting of CHAIN5', held on Thursday 12 February, and the outcomes of the 'annual conference' in Amsterdam, 12-13 February. If there are questions about them, you can send them to info@leido.nl and we will try to formulate the right answers...

It was decided in Amsterdam to have an interim Steering Group for CHAIN5 till the next 'community meeting' in Denmark. There we will discuss the composition of the Board and the Steering Committee, from 2016 on – based on the current situation and position of CHAIN in the 'world of education, training and lifelong learning'.

The members of the Steering Group are:

- Nick Davy (England)
- Toon Martens (Belgium)
- Sylvie Bonichon (France)
- Ole Faaborg (Denmark)
- Jan Nienhuis (the Netherlands)
- Roland van der Poel (the Netherlands)
- Hans Daale (the Netherlands).

The secretariat will till 2016 be in the hands of Leido (the Netherlands).

A first meeting of the SG will be planned in the coming weeks, foreseen before the summer holidays (if all agendas will allow that...).

CROWD RESEARCH: LEVEL 5... AN UPDATE -----

The Annual Conference showed that there is a lot of interest in an update of the surveys that already have been done in the past for getting an idea of the role of level 5 in member states (and maybe other countries, having good practices for CHAIN5, to be used in our activities). The CEDEFOP study covered 15 countries, and has given everyone a lot of information, but we have heard that CEDEFOP is not planning another study in the coming years, to learn also from the other countries (not having yet a national framework in a formal setting).

The proposal in Amsterdam done by the participants was to use our CHAIN5 network for such a research, not on a big scale with a lot of questions but just to get an overall overview of the situation in the countries.

How to do this...? We think that the most effective way is to send (in May) a questionnaire to all members (two pages at the most...) about this issue. The questionnaire can also be sent by every member to a colleague and/or a level 5 expert in his or her country – and also in other countries, having partners there to help us. We will add to the questionnaire a list of countries we have already members from, so everyone can take note of the countries that are not yet covered by CHAIN5.

We will use the filled-in questionnaires for a small report, to be published right after the summer holidays, and for a one-day seminar with external experts and representatives from other organisations that can be seen as the right stakeholders of CHAIN5.

So, in May you will receive the questionnaire, as part of this 'crowd research method'....

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR IN AMSTERDAM – 25/26 JUNE -----
(CO-PRODUCTION: LEIDO / CHAIN5 / UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO, OHIO, USA)

Like three years ago a group of 25 Americans, studying for a PhD (Doctorate) at the University of Toledo, Ohio, USA, will come to Europe for a two week study trip. After visits to Belgium and France the group will stay for a week in Amsterdam. Part of that stay will be the participation as group in the International Seminar on the 25th and 26th of June, having as overall theme: *Adaptability and Flexibility of Higher Education in the United States... and in European countries.*

At the moment we are busy with completing the programme. Here already some details – and there will be more in the next seminar newsletter (to be published in two weeks):

- Dates: 25 - 26 June 2015
- Place: Amsterdam (one of the buildings of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences)
- Thursday 25 June – 13:30 till 17:15 hours
- Friday 26 June – 09:30 till 13:00 hours - followed by a lunch
- Optional: Diner on Thursday evening (restaurant or a canal dinner cruise)
- Fee for the seminar: 145 euro
- There will be general presentations about recent developments in the USA and Europe – having in mind the formal introduction of the SCHE in the EHEA – to be compared with what is happening in the USA (Community Colleges). There will also attention for the introduction of Regional Associate Colleges in the Netherlands and possible similar initiatives in other countries. Of course we will talk about the latest news concerning VET and HE, permeability (outcomes of seminars and other events) and the role of Higher Education Institutions in regional co-maker-ship with VET institutions.
- The biggest part of the seminar will be used for interactive workshops, all starting with presentations by members of the American group, touring through Europe) – combined by discussions about differences between systems in other countries, looking at the 'background' of such a situation – to learn from each other.

The following themes will be used for the workshops:

- *Student Enrollment Management*
Recruitment and enrollment management (this topic includes also how to market and make sure students are supported while applying) in colleges and universities in the United States
- *Recruitment and Enrollment management:*
 - direct from high school students
 - adult students
 - students transferring from community colleges (pathways from community colleges to 4-year institutions).
- *Online Education*
 - Digital programs
 - MOOC's.

- *Working with Students of Concern*
(both academically underprepared but also psychologically challenged, including mental disorders and transition and fit)
 - Thinking about similar situations in big cities...
 - How to deal with diversity in groups
 - Specific training programs
- *Engaging International Students as Cultural Resources*
 - Using international students for 'internationalization at home'
 - Projects in 'international studies'

If you are interested in this seminar and you think that a trip to Amsterdam will be a fruitful opportunity to learn more about what is happening in the USA (knowing that traveling to the USA is relatively expensive due to the strong dollar, and the 'weak' euro...): let us know your ideas by sending them to info@leido.nl.

SEMINAR AMSTERDAM: TCA on PERMEABILITY VET-HIGHER EDUCATION -----

It was mentioned during the Annual Conference that the Dutch National Agency for Erasmus+ is organizing in cooperation with NA-BIBB a Transnational Cooperative Activity (TCA) on 'Permeability VET-Higher Education'. The event will be held in Amsterdam on the 13th and 14th of April. It was recommended to the Board of CHAIN5 to apply for the TCA – with the result that Hans Daale will be one of the selected participants. Of course we will report about the outcomes and the most interesting good practices.

These topics are on the agenda:

1. Transitions VET-HE
2. Learning Outcomes and credits
3. Quality Assurance.

There will be plenary presentations followed by discussions in small groups, with experts from member states.

More information? See at:

http://erasmusplus.nl/4_1124_TCA-Permeability-VET-Higher-Education.aspx

FACEBOOK AND LINKEDIN -----

During the conference it was decided to use LinkedIn and Facebook for CHAIN5. Eric Aldewereld (the Netherlands) and Ole Faaborg (Denmark) have taken the initiative for the first steps – and the results can be seen on LinkedIn (just in the very first phase...):

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/CHAIN-5-8254550?gid=8254550&mostPopular=&trk=tyah&trkInfo=clickedVertical%3Agroup%2Cidx%3A1-1-1%2CtarId%3A1428153083101%2Ctas%3AChain-5>

and on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/HEIchain5?fref=ts>

If you have 'small or big news' that can be seen as interesting for colleagues all over Europe, use both social media to spread it (and we will do this also starting this month, having more time for caring of CHAIN5...).

VET4EU2 -----

As mentioned in previous newsletters there is since August 2014 a platform with the triggering name: VET4EU2, bringing together the four European VET-Associations (EFVET, EVBB, EUproVET and EVTA) and two European HE-Associations (EURASHE, Eucen). Of course one of the big issues that they can bring on the table during meetings with partners and other organisations is the overlap between VET and HE, looking at HVET and SCHE - and all kinds of developments related to permeability between VET and HE. This will happen with respect for

each other position in the own sector – but it is also in some way a platform to exchange good practices and to share experiences, and to talk about common issues.

It is interesting – and important – to see that the European Commission, DG Employment, has discovered that VET4EU2 can give a perfect opportunity to discuss developments, projects, strategies and topics concerning professional education with the right stakeholders. DG Employment has therefore taken the decision to give this combination of associations a formal status, as a 'European platform'. It will be "*an expert-group with the name "Platform of European Associations of vocational education and training (VET)" – and it is being created with the objective to structure and strengthen the involvement of the VET providers associations in European cooperation on VET.*"

Of course we will keep in touch with the partners in VET4EU2 about a link to CHAIN5 – not being a political community in itself, as it has been decided when it was founded in 2013. But level 5 is an issue that can be combined with other issues that DG Employment is putting on the table... We will keep our members in CHAIN5 updated.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND TRANSFER TO 4-YEAR COLLEGES IN THE USA -----

In Annex 2 we present an article about the increasing enrollment numbers in Four Year Colleges (Universities) in the USA for students having done one or more semesters in a Community Colleges – or even the whole Associate programme, as a first step...

Will this be the European foreland, with more and more attention for programmes at level 5 from the side of youngsters, adult learning, employees and – don't forget them – the parents of young students, paying all the fees in a growing need of governments to use 'social loan systems'. This will be a topic for CHAIN5 in the coming year – and it will also be discussed in the workshops of the two-day-seminar in Amsterdam, in June – having a group of Americans there to give some information about those developments in the USA.

ANNEX 1

On the 12th and 13th of February 2015 we had our 'community meeting (general assembly)' of CHAIN5, followed by the Annual Conference. On the website www.chain5.net we have put all the presentations and additional documents, so we will publish here just the minutes of the CM and the outcomes and conclusions of the AC.

We will use all the results for the upcoming events and projects. One of them is to use the network for a scan of the situation with level 5 qualifications in the member countries – using the mechanism of 'crowd research'... without a lot of costs and with an effective use of everybody's time.

This survey will be done in May 2015. Keep an eye on your e-mail box...

ANNUAL CONFERENCE + COMMUNITY MEETING / 12-13 FEBRUARY 2015 / AMSTERDAM

MINUTES - Community Meeting - Thursday 12 February 2015 / 10:30 – 11.45

Agenda

1. Welcome, approval of agenda
2. Who is who...
3. Board and Steering Committee – Secretariat - current situation - new members - financing of meetings
4. Membership and Statutory matters: statutes and internal rules - membership in general - membership fee? - legal status, now... and from 2016 on - statutes: ideas? - internal rules: good examples?
5. Our Strategy / Project under Erasmus+ - status - aims - possibilities - New project: issues, partners, timeline, project manager, and other aspects
6. Survey on role of level 5 - Cedefop - DG EMPL - What can we do?
7. Contacts with other organisations, involved in 'level 5' – representation - EURASHE - VET4EU2 - WFCP - DG EMPL
8. Seminars - events organised by members - organized by CHAIN5 - 25-26 of June in Amsterdam
9. Website – Newsletters - suggestions - contributions - social media?
10. AOB
11. Closing

Here are the most important outcomes:

1. Who is who, everyone presents him- or herself. We have 20 participants in the meeting.
2. Board and Steering Committee. We have at the moment a small group and the members are all Dutch.
We are an international 'community' so we need representatives of organisations from other countries. It will make Chain 5 stronger when more organisations from different countries are involved. And more specialists are needed.
Seven people would be nice. The Dutch and three from HE and three from VET.
For the Steering Committee (Group) there are four people willing to participate:
 - Nick Davy, England (VET-HVET)
 - Ole Faaborg, Denmark (VET-HVET)
 - Toon Martens, Flanders (HE)
 - Sylvie Bonichon, France (HE)This means that we have 7 members (from the Netherlands: Roland van der Poel, Jan Nienhuis and Hans Daale).
3. We will discuss the legal status of CHAIN5 next year, during the third annual conference. The membership fee is also an issue then – knowing that in 2015 the membership is for free, and

the fee has to be connected to the activities we will have as CHAIN5, looking at the operational costs.

4. CHAIN5 has to be a network of organisations and not of individuals – members have to represent in some way a ‘target group’, or they can be an expert.... But in general the membership is open for everyone – and as being said, in 2016 we can decide about the conditions. The steering committee will come with a proposal for this
5. About Leido: all people involved are doing this as part of their job, to make sure that they are able to contribute to the network and to learn from other experts.
6. Leido is a foundation under Dutch law. An option, mentioned now, is to have CHAIN5 under the umbrella of Leido – if we have the idea that a separate foundation or organisation is not necessary. If CHAIN5 wants to be involved in projects, we need it. But... we will talk about this next year.
7. An important and interesting issue is the relationship between EURASHE, as of the two European association for HEIs, and CHAIN5. EURASHE has its Council Meeting at the end of the month and one of the items on the agenda is VET4EU2, and CHAIN5. Let us wait for what will be decided there.
We have to keep in mind that EURASHE is involved in all levels in HE - and level 5 is not HE in every country in Europe. It is formal, non-formal and informal, having all kinds of qualifications.
8. An aspect of the position of CHAIN5 is also the ‘independency’, knowing that level 5 is covering a broad spectrum, more than SCHE. EURASHE in general considers level 5 in that way as a part of HE, but with a strong connection with level 4 qualifications, also in a formal way offered. This mean that there is some ‘space’ for CHAIN5 in Europe, to play its own role..
9. We are living in a dynamic world, as we are noticing as people involved in level 5... Qualifications on this level will be more and more important looking at lifelong learning and flexibility, This means that as CHAIN5 we have to stay tuned to what is happening and to what kind of partners we need. An example: we need also the support by private institutions. Most of the members are at the moment public financed institutions, but qualifications at level 5 are offered ‘everywhere’ and by a lot of different providers.
10. We have decided about our mission statement in February 2014. Is it still up to date? Do we do the right things, according to what we have formulated then?
Yes, but we have to present us more to other institutions, associations and networks, to tell about CHAIN5 and Level5 in general. An example: We can present us in the next conference of the EAIE (www.eaie.eu) in September – always attracting 4000 or more participants to talk about developments in education. And we can be a member of ACA (www.aca.eu) .
11. The application in 2015 for a project under Erasmus+ was rejected. It was a project under HE, and the Dutch national agency suggests to have it the next time under VET.
12. Question: Are there other countries with more chance for acceptance? It shows that it is difficult to have a complete overview of what is the best, and where is the budget the highest. So let us keep it to the Netherlands to use the Hogeschool Rotterdam (Rotterdam Academy) for the project management.
13. In March there will be a meeting in Holland organised by the National Agency (Erasmus+) about the role of HVET. Maybe a suggestion for Leido to be there...
14. The Cedefop study on level 5 (and the role of the qualifications) was done by Dutch researchers. It was told that there will be no follow-up done by Cedefop.
15. In a meeting of DG Employment with VET4EU2 it was told that there will be a survey done in the coming year on the position of HVET. Maybe CHAIN5 can be involved in this activity by the European Commission. The meeting agrees with promoting CHAIN5 for this, using our network, in case Brussels will ask us as CHAIN5 for help.
16. Leido and AoC are members of the WFCP, the World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics. The AoC has good contacts in China - the system there is very interesting, including level 5 which is important there. It is not only that they learn from us, but also that we learn from them.

Maybe CHAIN5 can use the WFCP in the future, for more cooperation around the world.

17. The idea is that we need to organise as CHAIN5 more activities, seminars and conferences. This will be discussed in the Steering Group.
18. In June (25-26) there will be a seminar organised by Leido, but it can also be done under the umbrella of CHAIN5. A group of American PHD-students will be on a study trip to Europa, and this seminar is part of it – with presentations and workshops about the role of Universities in lifelong learning. More information will be published in March.
19. Question: Do we have a clear understanding what is going on in the different countries about level 5? Can we make a diagram about the situation in the different countries? Yes, using as basis for that the EURASHE report (2011) and the Cedefop study – and followed by a mapping using the members of CHAIN5. Good idea, to get a better overview of the complex position of level 5. This makes such a survey also interesting in a political way. It will be done in March or April this year by Leido.
20. We are going to use the Social Media. Eric Aldewereld will take care for a LinkedIn page and Ole Faaborg for Facebook.
21. At the end of the seminar the proposal was to have the next community meeting and annual conference in Denmark, Aalborg.

Annual Conference – 12-13 February 2015 - Amsterdam

Here a shortlist of outcomes and recommendations... See the website for all presentations.

Day 1

Common name for Short Cycle

1. A common name for Short Cycle, in an international setting, in the EHEA: Practitioner, Associate, Vocational Diploma, Associate degree. The recommendation by EURASHE will be 'Associate'. But every country can decide itself about using this name or not.

Norway

2. The practical situation in Norway about level 5 shows that the connection between education institutions in Norway, using qualifications at level 5 and level 6, is rather complex. There is more and more cooperation between Colleges in Norway and institutions abroad, like in England.
3. The Norwegian School of Creative Studies is a private institution. It means that the tuition fee is relatively high. There are between 200 and 300 exchange students per year. The countries selected are Australia, US and UK, but also Italy. There are long relationships. Enough knowledge of English is important for students, to make the exchange successful. Studying abroad is just possible if a student has passed the first two years in Norway. The countries chosen are often English spoken. But Italy is also important because of her design knowledge and experience. The education in these countries is also merely private. Comment: 'You have a local problem and you solve it international. Great!'
4. Southampton Solent University is a partner of the Norwegian Kreative University. The goal is to get a Bachelor's degree as Norwegian student. At this moment only students from Norway go to England, not the other way – maybe this will happen in the coming years.
5. Comment: What is typical for level 5, in an international setting to make students' exchange have a degree at level 5 possible, in Europe - like the arrangements for Bachelor and Master students. That can be an object of our research as CHAIN5
Comment: OK, but why should international exchange necessary for level 5 students? Is it helpful, making it a better study? This is difficult to prove, but maybe in the future it will also give us a possibility to have more flexible learning pathways... and also in an international setting, using students' exchange...

Day 2

Mission Statement

6. The Mission Statement: The suggestion is made to discuss this mission statement in the Steering Group and to send the draft to all members for comments. It is favourable to add the way we will reach our goals, specifying the goals we want to meet.

VET4EU2

7. A comment is made that this 'platform' looks coherent, but we have to keep in mind that there are different histories of the members. Hans Daale: That's right, but there are very good opportunities for making VET4EU2 an important player, in discussions concerning VET and Adult Education – with respect for the position and status of all individual members.

CHAIN5...

8. CHAIN5 has to invest in its strengths. We can participate in every 'club', but we have to look carefully at what has added value for the community.
9. Question: Do we need as CHAIN5 to seek for a separate position, with our own status, in some way 'stand-alone'...? The answer is difficult to formulate. We have to see what will happen in the coming year, in the 'dynamic world' of education. Important is that if we want to have the right attention for 'level 5', we need to cooperate other organisations – building our own network.
10. Important is to earn our place, for the status of level 5. We can use our own conferences, seminars and other activities for that. And of course we can invite representatives of the Euro-pean Commission, the European Parliament and other important bodies...
11. But... we also have to keep in mind that the position and the role of level 5 can be different in countries. But in general we have to focus on what we have in common.
12. And... in case there is a European strategy for VET, AE, HE and other systems for non-formal and informal learning, we have to be 'at the table in Brussels' as CHAIN5. As community but this can also be the case in a combination with a 'partner'.
13. Do we know what level 5 is? Yes, in general we have ideas about this level. But there are a lot of different institutions all over the world offering level 5 qualifications: In HE, HVET, as a mixture, post-secondary – and in 'independent systems'. As CHAIN5 we have to take a look at those systems, in all countries – using our members. In this way we can produce a 'level 5 roadmap'.
14. But we don't need just one system in Europe. There may be differences, having the stakeholders in kind. What we have in common in this group is the need of recognition of level 5, to give it the right place in the national framework. Therefore we need to know more about how level 5 is organised in the various countries.
15. One of the aspects of this situation is to build up trust in level 5 qualifications. It is not necessary to change a system of something like that. The result of our investigations as CHAIN5 will be having more knowledge and understanding about what is and will be done in countries. This can be a research, using the members in CHAIN5, about the 'state of play' in countries and regions.
16. By the way: In England the words 'technical' and 'professional' are used, also in VET, because 'vocational' is 'poisoned'.
17. As mentioned we can play a role in Brussels and in other organisations, also involved in some way in level 5 - as CHAIN5 or in combination with partners. Eric Aldewereld would like to be a member of the think tank we need for that. We welcome other members, to inform the Steering Group about interesting developments and important issues.
18. It is also important that level 5 qualifications play a role in collective labour agreements and other issues related to labour systems. This can be an issue for the project under Erasmus+.
19. In the Bologna Process SCHE will be put in place in the Higher Education Area, in a formal way, in Yerevan, next May. This gives us as CHAIN5 the opportunity to ask for more emphasis on level 5 in general.

Higher Business Diploma

20. In the Netherlands a new type of qualification on level 5 will be introduced by Leido, the Higher Business Diploma (HBd) - with more focus on the world of work than the existing Associate degree.
21. In Denmark and Norway the situation is similar as in Holland. In Norway a combination of the study with the workplace is necessary. Also in Finland there is more attention for such a diploma.
22. The question, by the way, is: Do we need for all types of qualifications on level 5 just one common name: Associate degree? An issue to discuss next year...
23. In the private sector you can introduce a diploma like the HBd, but not in health care for instance, due to the fact this is about education in public areas.
24. The acceptance of a HBd depends on the adaptation by the organisations in the world of work.
25. In Flanders has been chosen for the situation that level 5 is exclusively to be used for professional education.
26. In Denmark companies talk with Universities about their business educations about the link with the labour market. Large companies have their own universities.

Erasmus+

27. For the Erasmus+ application Marije Markus, Luc Broes and Nick Davy are willing to look at the text and other issues.
28. In the project we have to look for situations whether level 5 is a part of VET or HE, and how it 'works' - that is very important. So, let us identify level 5 in every country, searching for similarities and differences – as input for our community.
29. Perhaps we have to use other sources for a project like COSME and not Erasmus+, if we fail again...

Extra comment: All the suggestions, ideas and proposals will be used as input for the Steering Group of CHAIN5 – to make it practical, concrete and usable for activities.

Outcomes discussions Annual Conference – 12/13 February 2015 – Amsterdam

Here an overview of all comments, suggestions, ideas, good practices, problems... the result of the discussions during the annual conference.

We (the Steering Group) will use them for:

- *the application under Erasmus+*
 - *the first meeting as SG*
 - *the first draft of a 'business plan' for CHAIN5*
 - *upcoming activities as CHAIN5, and with our partners.*
-

VET4EU2

- We can have a survey with them on:
 - System for transitions between level 5 and level 6
 - Tools used for these transitions:
 - National Framework
 - Learning Outcomes
 - Credits
 - Other?
- And: Are they used? How are they used?

NATIONAL PLATFORMS LIKE VET4EU2, COMBINING THE SAME STAKEHOLDERS?

- Not very likely in France or relevant in Finland (no level 5)
- Holland: in the working?
- Norway: Working on a long term strategy

CHAIN5 IN GENERAL - ISSUES

- We need to focus on the clarification (also accreditation) of level 5 – and not to mix too much with adult education
- Flexible learning pathways from level 4 → 5, and from level 5 → 6
- Dual learning + Adult Education is important for level 5, but also for other levels
- Entrepreneurship is also important for all levels
- We need a strong cooperation with industries (the world of work)
- Problem: How to - theoretically – give a position to our Associate degrees in the description of the diploma supplement (and other instruments like Europass)?
- Looking at the transfer from level/Associate degree to the Bachelor (getting that degree)
- Looking for international partnerships with level 5 colleges looking to send their students for a top-up programme – looking at barriers...
- How to find pursuit for SCHE students?
- Looking for international (European) solutions and connections... in case the national solution doesn't exist... → CHAIN5
- CHAIN5: Explore Eurodice database or our own expertise and find solutions by connecting other countries to a national problem
- Trying to find European definitions to develop a common language...
- Role of University Colleges (Universities of Applied Sciences in the development and the organisation of level 5
- Problem: A clear situation of level 5 in all participating countries
 - specific problems?
 - credit systems
 - connection with the business world (think of dual education)
- Problems:
 - world of work (marketing) versus Associate degree
 - possibilities of exchange (within Associate degree and Bologna agreements)
 - European affiliations → same vocabulary - international
- And: World of work in the western part of Holland is involved, educational programme in the eastern part of Holland is more a problem...
- I want to know in a more accurate way more about other (chain5) SCHE in other countries in order to build connections for my students (during the courses, studies and mobility, and internships – after graduation finding top-up programmes...)
- Finland:
 - Need for having more people in higher education (from working life, after vocational education, career progress, skills/competencies needed in the labour market...)
 - no need having degree after degree
 - level 5 (SCHE) as a solution?
 - Ministry wanted to have a pilot project
- Level 5 as a higher education 'package', competence based (60 credits) for all
- Name: SCHE won't be a degree in Finland; the name should not indicate that and that is would be a lower level...
- Discussion: Lack of comparability across the countries
- Cooperation / more involvement of employers
- Flexibility + mobility of trainers (→ internships of companies)

- We have to look for good practice of working together with businesses, the world of work – to give students in a programme on level 5 the opportunity to get experiences concerning issues related to working in a company (other than providing internships, excursions, guest speakers...). How to do this...
- Make it easier for students who completed level 5 to continue their study in a Bachelor programme (in your own country, international).

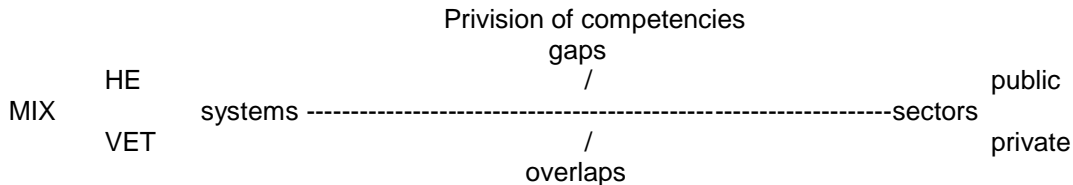
GOOD NEWS AND PRACTICES

- Put together all level 5 programmes in one part of the organisation/department of the University or College – like in Rotterdam – it works well...
- In the Netherlands: In teaching education: back to officially qualified instructors and teaching assistants (level 5). Qualification is very important in the educational world. Structuring of middle management in education... it is still a puzzle...
- Possibility to go to school and to improve yourself to level 5... when you are at level 4... step by step... but give them the right opportunity
- Foundation degrees at level 5 in the UK have been going for some time and are more accepted now and of growing importance
- Foundation degrees are a good mechanism for collaboration with industry and with local Further Education Colleges (level 5)
- Our minister declared this week that level 5 is a top priority in the next years
- In Belgium (Flanders) level 5 is introduced... but it took a long time...
- In France SCHE is more and more a strategy for students in order to start their HE pathway. Why? Because after two years they have a resume with a range of academic skills, professional skills and also at least 12 weeks of internships (mandatory and sometimes abroad). With those resumes, companies but more over universities and institutions for higher education are really interested and students follow-up their process on a professional Bachelor degree and after that a Master degree.
- The questions to cooperate in developments of the Associate degree – province wise (!) in cooperation with the world of work. These questions come from VET institutions... There is even a coordinator financed by VET institutions in the province (state...).
- The development of two associate degree programmes extra within the institute ('green sector')
- In policy documents (the Netherlands) flexibility of educational systems (more specific: LLL) is related with level 5 (Associate degree)
- How to convince Universities and University Colleges that it could be in their interest to allow transitions from Vocational Colleges to them...
- Growing attention for level 5 in Norway:
A government appointed commission has just delivered a large report on level 5 in Norway:
 - 1 Analyses of the current situation
 - 2 Diagnosis of the current situation – serious
 - 3 49 points of suggested actions that together calls for a major reform of the Norwegian Vocational Colleges
 It had been decided that this report will be the basis of proposition to the Parliament delivered in April 2016

After that there will be another proposition to the Parliament in 2017 with major changes in the law or Vocational Colleges

POSITION

- CHAIN5 has to be there, where organisations are talking about 'levels 4, 5 and 6'
- Use CHAIN5 as a 'qualification network' – quality preserving of the qualification
- CHAIN5: Provide know-how not available elsewhere...



Action research → Roadmap for meaningful cooperation

FOCUS

- We can focus on a new focus for level 5...
- Denmark: Sociale heritage / prevent loss of talent / use non-academic environment talent
- UK:
 - new degree level apprenticeships just launched – levels 5, 6 and 7
 - foundation degrees now expanding – again (after decline in the last 2-3 years)
 - 'higher nationals (HND)' due to be reclassified as 'further' education rather than 'higher education programmes' – this will have implications...
- Netherlands: Positive developments – level 5 is part of the bachelor, level 6 programme, but within the organisation of our university of applied sciences (Rotterdam) – all level 5 programmes are in one department, so we are able to develop our specific approach for level 5 students
- Portugal: Level 5 has been receiving more attention here because institutions are starting to implement SCHE programmes
- Finland: the number of level 5 qualifications (specialist vocational qualifications) completed is on the rise. These qualifications are becoming more established and new qualifications have been developed

NAME SHORT CYCLE HIGHER EDUCATION

- Practitioner (3x)
- Associate (3x)
- Professional Performer
- Vocational Diploma (2x)
- Aspirant Level
- Fellow

PROJECT THEMES

- Develop agreed set of level descriptors at level 5 across Europe
- Act as a clearing house to help set up partnerships between level 5 colleges and universities
- Evaluation of learning outcomes at level 5 → study cases
- Do not aim too much / but use acceptable intellectual outputs (realistic)
- Desk research: mapping
 - level 5 situation for participating country
- Looking at possible modes of harmonisation of national descriptors

- Involvement of business world. What are the criteria for differentiating at level 5 and level 6 (professional bachelor students). Implementation of these criteria in Quality assurance. Harmonisation at level 5.
 - Level 5 differs from level 6, looking at the input of industry
 - More attention for level 5 – find business/industry feedback – what do they want
 - Differences between the levels 5 and 6 – and others
 - Harmonizing in Europe?
 - There is not one common 'language' in this discussion – Eurodice describes the problem. Project: what kind of solution for this...
 - Definitions in European context
 - Route: Creating a seamless route through vocational/higher education programmes
 - Access: Breaking traditional barriers – breaking social heritage
 - Palette: Can we add flexibility by offering modules – to build routes through HVET/SCHE/HE using modules...
 - Funding: Different economic/financial systems prevent comparable and workable solutions for study/career paths
State funding vs private institutions vs fee structure = not giving a level playing field
-

ANNEX 2

More and more students in the USA are taking the route to a Bachelor's degree by doing the first two years – or at least a part of that programme - in a Community College. The transfer to a Four Year College, mostly based on an agreement between the institutions involved makes it possible to have a more flexible and cheaper learning pathway.

On the internet we found this article, based on a report of the NCS Research Center. It shows that the Associate degree programme (level 5) is important for young people and adult learners to get a degree at a higher level. Will it be the future situation for Europe too?

Community College to Bachelor's

March 26, 2015

Ashley A. Smith

Nearly half of all students graduating with a four-year degree in the 2013-14 school year had some experience within a two-year institution.

That detail is a part of a new [report](#) released Wednesday by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, which found 46 percent of all students who completed a 4-year degree had been enrolled at a 2-year institution at some point in the past 10 years.

Of those students, 65 percent enrolled for at least three semesters at a community college.

"The idea that there's only one path through college is antiquated," said Jason DeWitt, research manager with the center.

There are different ways to earn a bachelor's degree, he said, adding that the numbers show students may have started at a four-year institution, attended a two-year and completed at a different four-year college.

"We need to really understand the role that community colleges play to better define success in community colleges," DeWitt said.

DeWitt said the study also doesn't completely answer the '[undermatching](#)' theory, which refers to prepared, but disadvantaged students attending less selective colleges, like two-year institutions. Undermatching theorists posit that those students are less likely to complete a four-year degree.

The report doesn't confirm or reject the undermatching phenomenon, DeWitt said, "but it does shed light on an academic pathway that has historically been understated." He added that the report tracks graduates' journey back from a bachelor's degree.

However, previous [studies](#) show that 62 percent of students who transfer from two-year to four-year institutions go on to earn bachelor's degrees within six years of transferring, he said. The rate is even higher for students who complete a credential at the two-year college before transferring -- at 72 percent.

But Sara Goldrick-Rab, a professor of educational policy studies and sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, said the results show students who transfer from two-year to four-year colleges are succeeding, and undermatching isn't as widespread as some think. "It can't be the case that everybody is held back for life by going to a community college," she said.

Those students who possibly are undermatched are a very small portion of the college student body, she said, adding that there could be a myriad of reasons why they don't choose a four-year institution, from poor high school counseling to the cost of a major university.

COMMENTS:

Clifford Adelman • 4 days ago

What would help us better understand how far we've come in the past two decades would be to add just three features to this analysis with data that NSC does not possess: age at entrance to postsecondary education, credits earned at different types of institutions, and fields in which those credits were earned. One can get all of that from a combination of the Beginning Post-

secondary Students longitudinal study of 2003-2009 (for the age at entrance divisions) and NCES' transcript-based grade cohort longitudinal studies (for credits and course-work). For a raft of older data to demonstrate a base-line, dig out "Moving Into Town---and Moving On: the Community College in the Lives of Traditional-age Students" (U.S. Department of Ed, 2005).

Pete • 4 days ago

I am curious if this study broke the numbers down by region. I would guess that the percentage of students who pass through community colleges on their way to a four year degree is higher in places like California than in the Northeast.

SometimesAngryProf Pete • 3 days ago

So then why not actually look at the study and satisfy your curiosity? Why "guess" when the answer is available? <http://nscresearchcenter.org/s...>

Socrates Pete • a day ago

Don't bet on it Pete. One community college that I know of in California has over 70% of entering full time students declaring that their reason for enrolling in the two-year college is to gain the credits required for transfer to a four year institution, but the statistics show the sad truth. Only 9% of them actually transferred!

Another CC Prof • 4 days ago

"... the numbers show students may have started at a four-year institution, attended a two-year and completed at a different four-year college."

Are there any OVERMATCHING theorists out there? Reverse transfer is a familiar situation to those of us at community colleges, although many intend to return to the original institution once they resolve the overmatching problem.

Socrates Another CC Prof • a day ago

The real problem--if you let the students tell it--is that they begin at a four year institution and find the courses too rigorous for them. They have friends bragging about "how easy" the courses are at the community college they attend and how low the fees are. The four-year college student then decides to join his friends at community college, thereby saving major bucks on course fees and even getting vouchers for free books, not to mention the "easier" coursework. After two years there, he then may or may not re-enroll in a four year college.

Lynda • 3 days ago

I think this study is missing a very important piece of information. It is now very common for high school students to take community college classes while in high school. In California, it's free. So sure, they have lots of CC credits, but they never intended on becoming a full time student there. Those classes are a big factor in getting them into the most selective colleges. So using these stats to say that everybody's taking the transfer path is not presenting an accurate picture.

SOCRATES Lynda • a day ago

Very true! And, in some high schools students are receiving triple credit for completing college courses from the local community colleges which the state university system will accept for transfer.

Jason Fossella • 3 days ago

I started at a community college, transferred to a four year, finished a semester early, and then went on to earn a PhD. but I got counted as a drop out? that might be the dumbest thing I've ever heard.

Trivium Jason Fossella • 2 days ago

Excellent example of what's wrong with their counting!

zeke199 • 3 days ago

Looking at the study's data, states with the highest percentages of 2-yr attendees have higher than average foreign student attendance. California recently & significantly increased the proportions for foreign students' acceptance into public universities & paying out-of-state tuition, in a cynical means of reducing the state budget deficit. This resulted in fewer California taxpaying parents' kids being accepted to its 4-yr institutions, and many ended up in 2-yr colleges as a result. I suspect a similar scenario occurred in Texas & other states near the top of the list, given their relatively higher proportions of foreign students attending their colleges.

SOCRATES zeke199 • a day ago

The prestigious University of Southern California has the highest number of foreign students (over 8,000 just from China) of any American university. They love the higher tuition payments, and they aggressively solicit by means of special "sales" agents working the China market. Many of the students enter with fraudulent scores and partially fabricated academic records, but USC doesn't care as long as the cash keeps flowing. They hope to gain even more China students going into the future.

zeke199 • 3 days ago

Looking at the study's data, states with the highest percentages of 2-yr attendees tend to have higher than average foreign student attendance. California recently & significantly increased the proportion of foreign students' acceptance into public universities, in a cynical means of reducing the state budget deficit. This resulted in fewer California taxpaying parents' kids being accepted to its 4-yr institutions, and many ended up in 2-yr colleges as a result. I suspect a similar scenario occurred in Texas & other states near the top of the list, given their relatively higher proportions of foreign students attending their colleges.

Antionette Rolle • 2 days ago

I am a student presently studying at a community college in Irving Texas. This is my third semester and most of my classmates are transferring to a four year college after doing their core subjects. I think that community colleges play an enormous role in educating students for many reasons including students being able to live at home which would help with little to no overhead expenses, courses per credit are less expensive and students are allotted more time to decide what their intended major would be to enable success.

Trivium Antionette Rolle • 2 days ago

So glad to hear from CC students.

SOCRATES Antionette Rolle • a day ago

Yes, all that is true, but don't forget to mention other perks that exist as well. In our local city colleges in California a huge percentage of the students get the course fees totally waived. So attendance is free. They also receive around \$4000 or more for "living expenses" if they are low income, and it is a grant not a loan. On top of that they get a \$200 voucher for books. I have seen students enroll, get the waivers and the book voucher, then hang around outside the college bookstore during the first week of the semester. I wondered why, and I soon found out. They were selling the books they just got for FREE with the vouchers, then immediately selling them for CASH to other students at rates which undercut what the bookstore was charging. They then dropped out. Nothing was done to pursue them or recoup the voucher funds.
