

Preface

As of 2005, the notion that open and distance teaching universities needed to differentiate beyond sole (online) education delivery, got more substance. Many of the single mode open and distance teaching universities in Europe at that time, seemed to have quite a strong focus on educational delivery, without the possibility of providing their students access to work experience during the enrolment, the kind of experience the traditional universities refer to as: internships. Stakeholder relations were limited as regards the cooperation with (public and private) organisations, professional bodies, chambers of commerce, social partners, et cetera. Also, the typical characteristics of online education prevented the immediate implementation of (proven) conventional solutions for employability enhancement. It was quite clear that research was needed on the kind of initiatives that could be taken to enhance employability for online education, and (traditional) universities serving online education.

Accordingly in 2006, the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU) started its first collaborative European 'employability' project with the objective to facilitate (distance education) students to enter into online working, stimulate their employability, and provide (distance) educational systems with increased business and market connectivity by means of flexible modality internships. This first project, referred to as Cross Border Virtual Mobility (CSVM), also signalled the launch of a four year 'EADTU Employability Programme' (2006-2010), in which such projects as Cross Border Virtual Entrepreneurship (CBVE), Cross Border Virtual Incubator (CBVI), and The Employability Clinique (TEC), entered the drawing board. It is a real challenge for me to be able to conceptualise, initiate and coordinate the Employability Programme on behalf of EADTU.

In this publication, the results from the CSVM project are elaborated on. The publication describes the background of the project CSVM, the theoretical introduction as to why internships are actually needed, the results of the experience survey of conventional internships, the state of affairs of remote internships inside and outside Europe, the overview of technical, pedagogical, organisational, and economic barriers of remote internships, the distinct models identified from research as concerns the organisation of remote internships, the results of actual pilot cases on remote internships as configured and realised by the European partners of the CSVM project, and the development path towards the realisation of the premier European portal for clearing remote internships.

The research described in this publication may be very useful for universities (both online education and traditional education) and organisations (both public and private), as well as the

different stakeholder organisations active in the field of education and employment. The publication contains some 42 European and non-European case references to remote internships, and provides a first-hand look into 7 intern projects, conducted by two of the CSVM partners i.e., the Estonian e-University and the Open University of the Netherlands. The number of pilots conducted is actually even higher. More than a dozen remote internship experiences are available from the Hungarian CSVM partner as well i.e., the University of Miskolc. Results hereof have come available when going to press with this manuscript. They are to be taken up in a second edition of the publication.

I would like to express my thanks to the European partners of the CSVM project for their pleasant collaboration over the two years. Moreover, collaboration has been so successful that it has been able to extend it towards other European projects as well.

The research described in this publication has been co-funded by the European Commission under the Leonardo da Vinci Programme (Lifelong Learning).

September 2008

Cornelis Adrianus (Kees-Jan) van Dorp
Heerlen, The Netherlands