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Digital Internship Model for Higher Professional Studies

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DIMPS VIRTUAL INTERSHIP AND WEB-SOLUTION REVIEW

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DIMPS VIRTUAL INTERSHIP AND WEB-SOLUTION REVIEW

General observation on DIMPS virtual internship

The primary benefit of Virtual internship (VI) is it can provide students with a safe, real-world learning experience based on authentic projects for companies located anywhere in the world. Virtual internship model includes no travel and housing costs and removes barriers such as time and relocation.

Depending on the field of work general model suggested by DIMPS project can be easily adjusted to a specialized model. VI involves all parties of interest in terms of internship: students, colleges or faculties (teachers) and companies (mentors).

Companies in VI model become partners with schools. School management and teachers together with company officials create learning outcomes that match specific needs of the company for certain competencies of employees. Company's employees become mentors and educators who together with the teachers determine the project plan, which contains duration, activities, goals, deadlines and required knowledge. Company catalog will depend on school management and teachers' skills, but it might contain a significant number of leading companies in wider region or even all over the world. That will give opportunity to students to carry out their internships with foreign companies and to collaborate on projects with students from abroad. Student's biography will have representative reference. Students will build relations and network with future potential employers.

The teachers have an important role to motivate students to choose a company and a corresponding project in accordance with their interests. They then identify students that fit the requirements of the specific project plan. The teacher thus becomes an intermediary between students and companies and contributes to the success of all parties involved.

Mentors through effective communication and collaboration with students and teachers, monitor the implementation of internship step by step from its start to final evaluation. They assist the student when facing issues and difficulties while carrying out the tasks assigned to them. In that way, mentors get the opportunity to guide students, shaping their future competences.

At the end of the internship, the students deliver personal reports about success of the implemented practice and gained experience. This is crucial for the future VI experiences and further improvements on existing ones.

General observation on DIMPS platform for the virtual internship

Technical prerequisites for the realization of VI model are the existence of flexible, scalable, and functional web platform together with the staff trained for setting and maintaining the platform. Chamilo platform completely satisfy the requirements. In DIMPS project, Chamilo was tailored to meet project's needs. It was possible because Chamilo is excellent LMS that takes place and deploys rapidly.



Among the main functionalities of Chamilo platform are: management of courses, users and training cycles, SCORM standard (Shareable Content Object Reference Model) support and quick authoring tools, multi-institution mode (with centralized management portal), time-controlled exams, internationalization with utf-8, time zones, automatic generation of certificates, user progress tracking, built-in social network, forums and blog. Chamilo allows the teacher to choose from a number of pedagogical methodologies, one of which is social constructivism. The Chamilo software allows the teacher to take control and easily “disappear” so that the content follows its true place within the student experience. Chamilo has a growing list of documentation resources available on content aggregation websites: youtube, slideshare, twitter, vimeo, etc.

Communication and interactions between the teachers, students, and mentors, can be intensive through Chamilo platform which makes teachers’ and mentors’ roles more active and proactive and thus ensuring the success of the project.