

BLENDED LEARNING BEST PRACTICES

Blended Learning Coaches	
This pilot project took place between September 2018 and Mai 2019	Julia Henschler Sächsischer Volkshochschulverband e.V.
Element	Guiding questions
Type of document	It is a concept paper describing the project implementation including the course „Blended Learning Coaches“ (https://www.vhs-sachsen.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/Konzept_Blended_Learning_Coaches.pdf)
Publisher	Julia Henschler Sächsischer Volkshochschulverband (Saxon Association of Volkshochschulen)
Target audience	Teachers who work at Volkshochschulen (adult education school) (abbreviation VHS)
Field	All fields in education at Volkshochschule (including language learning for migrants, entrepreneurship and so on) can be covered by this concept
Objective	It is a training for coaches from the adult education schools to enable them to use blended Learning in their classes. They not only get the practical knowledge about digital tools and learning platforms but also get the methodical and didactical know-how for enriching their classes.
Location /geographical coverage	It was used in Saxony, Germany. The presence training pilot took place in Leipzig, Germany.
Introduction	Nowadays numerous online tools for learning (apps, platforms...) are available for teachers and users. But coaches also need the abilities to use them in a didactical and methodical way suitable for the respective learner group. Therefore the concept „Blended-Learning-Coaches“ was designed during the project lifetime and tested with 12 VHS teachers from Saxony.
Stakeholders and Partners	The target group is teachers/coaches of the adult education schools VHS. Indirect beneficiaries are all learners of these coaches as they will profit from the blended learning approaches and the newly gained knowledge directly.
Financing Body	The association of Saxon adult education centers Sächsischer Volkshochschulverband e.V. financed the development of the concept.
Context	As written above, there are many tools and platforms for e-learning available. But the methodical and didactical approach is missing very often. Therefore the VHS association saw the needs of trying out something new and the pilot project Blended-Learning-Coaches was started.

The main objectives	<p>The participants shall be enabled to identify suitable online-tools and instruments for their courses to change them from only face-to-face to blended learning courses. They shall learn how e-learning can be used in a good and positive way and how they can guide their learners despite the online parts.</p>
The description of the practice	<p>The Blended Learning Coaches course was developed as answer to the needs of Volkshochschulen.</p> <p>The training was divided into 3 modules of 30 teaching units each). Unit 1: Basics of online learning and teaching Unit 2: E-didactics and digital tools Unit 3: Evaluation and transfer: media-based scenarios Development of the own portfolio of 10 teaching units</p> <p>It was carried out in blended-learning format so that the teachers/coaches could find themselves in the role of learners. The pilot training within this concept was carried out between November 2018 and May 2019.</p>
Outcomes of the practice	<p>The course was designed as pilot course. After the implementation, feedback was given and the course was adapted slightly according to the feedback. Meanwhile the course runs regularly at VHS Leipzig to coach more trainers for blended learning. The feedback of the pilot participants was very useful to recognize better the needs of the adult educators in VHS schools, taking into account their pre-knowledge of blended learning and special technical tools.</p>
Success Factors	<p>First, you need a skilled trainer who is able to teach the modules. Secondly, the technical equipment is a necessity of course. The vhs.cloud platform that was used in the modules is not available for external users (only for trainers and their learners and VHS members). Therefore, an alternative platform needs to be found and this platform should be tested in advance if it fits the needs of the special target groups.</p>
Constraints	<p>According to the experiences during the pilot course test phase and also based on the feedback of the participants there were some challenges identified. The used platform in this case was vhs.could. Some participants were not used to it before the course started. This means that – independently of the platform – the participants in the future should know it before and should be used to the different features or an introduction should be inserted in the first module.</p>

Lessons learned	As explained above, the technical requirements should always be taken into account when planning a blended learning course. The platform that was used in the pilot training was not totally familiar to all participants. This is time-consuming until everyone is at the same level and the features can be used adequately. As it was a pilot this was a good lesson to learn.
Sustainability	The funding should be clarified in advance. In this case, the pilot course as well as the following courses are funded by Sächsischer Volkshochschulverband (Saxon Association of Volkshochschulen). The improvements after the pilot were taken into account and the new course version is free for adult educators of VHS schools in Saxony. The costs of the pilot course development and implementation as well as the following courses are not available. Nevertheless, this type of course is very useful for a sustainable education offer. Especially the year 2020 showed the necessity of going new ways in teaching and learning. The more teachers can offer their courses in blended learning style, the more people benefit from the ongoing learning offers. On the long term, this concept is very sustainable.
Development of the practice	It was already improved according to the feedback of the 12 participants from the pilot course and is offered as regular course meanwhile at VHS as advanced training for the VHS adult educators (state: November 2020)
Conclusion	The good practice is very useful in terms of an improvement of the own educational offers. Bringing the educators in the role of learners broaden their horizons and make them aware of the different aspects of blended learning and what should be taken into account when changing the own education offers from mere face-to-face to blended learning. The good practice also shows well how a further training for trainers could look like and how it could be implemented. Additionally the objective and ample reflections at the end of the document give many hints what should be taken into account when a train the trainer – concept is developed.
Related resources that have been developed	none
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