

Module 4 Executive summary

Results and experiences of the profiling and mentoring

In the M4 phase, the two universities, University of Pannonia and Wroclaw University of Economics tried out the profiling tool and used the results in the semester. Both universities offered coaching for the students who took part in “LELLE courses”. Here are the findings of the two semesters.

1. University of Pannonia

Results

At the University of Pannonia (UP), we used the Profiling tool during both semesters in the academic year of 2016/17.

In the first semester, we chose one course (Business communication) with five modules and all five modules had different lecturers. We administered the 1st Input testing at the beginning of the practical modules in October and took the test again in January when all the modules were over (Module 2). The students were first graders, 54 students filled out the questionnaire.

In the second semester, we chose a different approach. We selected three courses with 2-3 grader students: Corporate responsibility, Hotel management, Travel agency management. We took the 2nd Input at the beginning of the semester in February and the second Output testing at the end of the semester in June. 65 students took part in the second semester.

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In the following graph, the means of the results are shown. Overall, the measures show that there is considerable development in most of the subskills of the three LELLE skills. The weakest skills are Time management and Decision making. The strongest skills according to the tool are Autonomous work and Assertive communication. In case of Assertive communication, a small shrinkage can be seen in the second semester's Output testing, we will come back to this in the Experiences chapter.



Graph no. 1: Means of the Profiling tool results at UP (MOLP: managing own learning path, PS: problem solving, CT: critical thinking)

Experiences and limitations

As it can be seen in the menas, the Profiling tool has a considerable ceiling effect that could be because the students in average have limited knowledge of how they evaluate themselves and they also may not know precisely what are included in the skills. The questionnaire itself contains behavioral statements that makes it easier to fill it out, but the perception of a behavior can be different regarding the level of experience and self-knowledge. During the meetings with students, we experienced that explaining the skills and the content helped a lot in the better understanding of their own behavior. This was one of the things we chose Managing own learning path as one of the skills in the first place, because we felt that this is crucial for the students.

In the case of Assertive communication, the slight decline in the second Output can be explained through a deeper understanding of the skill content. This is a good example of the ceiling effect as well, the students have little insight of their own behavior and they rate themselves better than they are, but with a good detailed information on how these skills look like, the second measurement is more valid than the first. We learnt this in the process, so when using the Profiling tool, we need to make sure that the students know exactly what we are measuring.

We offered coaching for the students using the portfolio and we also used the Skill rubrics (evaluation criteria) in the course proceedings and evaluation, so the students could understand how they developed in the tested areas during the semester. The experiences were fruitful, the students mentioned that they are more involved in their learning process, they were more satisfied with these courses than with other non-LELLE courses. Those who took part in the coaching were even more motivated to learn more about themselves and to consciously reflect their own learning and skill development.

2. Wroclaw University of Economics

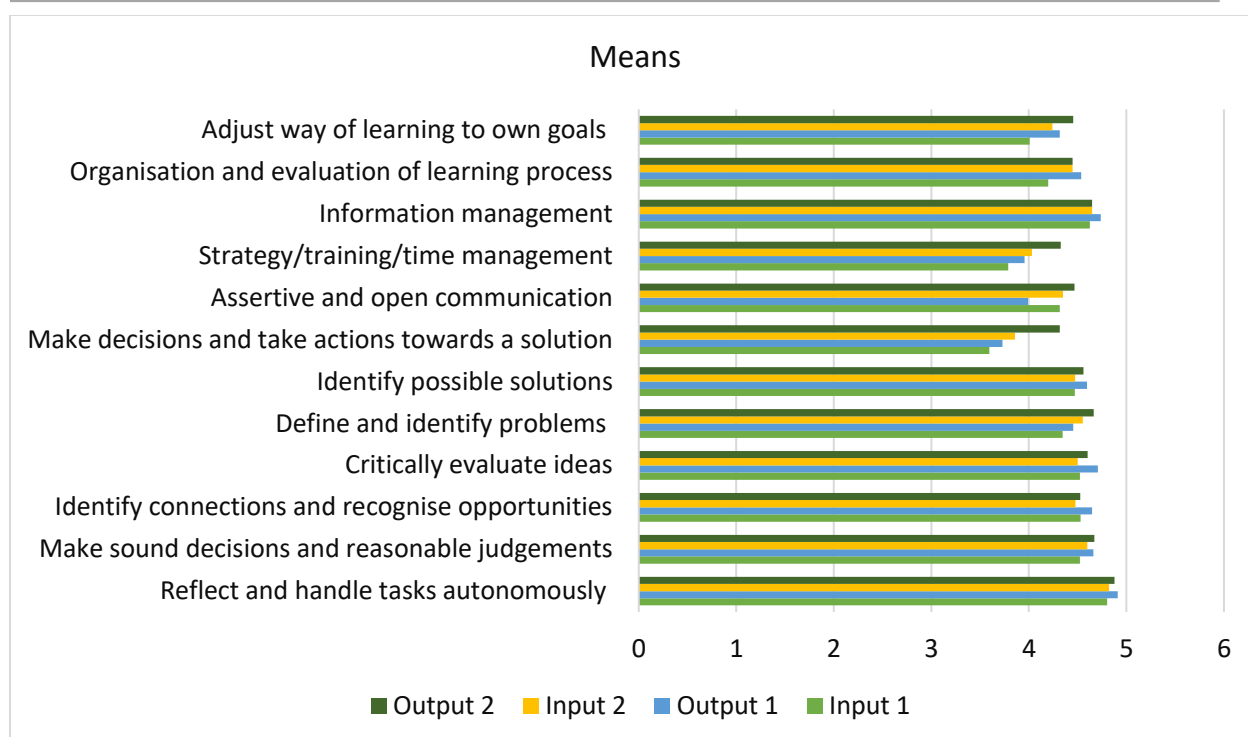
Results

At the Wroclaw University of Economics (WUE), we used the Profiling tool during both semesters during the academic year of 2016/17.

In the first semester, 34 students - majors in Logistics, Management, and a group of students from the Design Thinking Research Club – completed the Profiling tool. The students were 2nd and 3rd year undergraduates. The students then took part in various activities aimed at improving their skills of critical thinking and problem solving which were introduced to their curricula.

In the second semester, we chose a different approach. We have asked students from various majors to take part in the project and we were able to gather data from 56 completed questionnaires. The students then took part in 2-hour blocks of workshops aimed at improvement of ability of management of one's own learning process.

We would like to emphasize that during first and second semester many more students took part in activities related with implementation of exercises which enhance 3 key skills identified in LELLE, the numbers shown above refer just to the students who have completed the Profiling tool.



Graph no. 2: Means of the Profiling tool results at WUE

Experiences and limitations

As shown on the graph 2 responses of students from both semesters point to a conclusion that in general all skills have improved after conducting activities from the LELLE project. Polish students were aware that the exercises were being tested and if successful they might be introduced to various curricula. Thus students simply might have wanted to make the curricula more interesting and change their answers at the end of semester in order to help achieving this goal. This was the comment of one of the students, however this research was not focused on gathering qualitative data.

We would like to emphasize that a lot of students have filled the survey very quickly (in the first semester 28 students out of 34 have taken less than 10 minutes to answer all 48 questions and read the full page of introduction). When asked about their answers some students replied that the scale was clear for them – for example they had difficulties in describing the

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difference between 4 and 5 mark on a scale regarding certain questions. Overall majority of the students found questions too complex and the entire survey too long. Therefore, their answers, especially at the end of the survey, might have been random – just to finish as soon as possible.

We would like to emphasize that the coaching process helped immensely when it came to self-evaluation and understanding of particular skills. In addition, major improvement in the means after the semester came from the answers of the students who have completed the coaching process.

We would like to recommend future researches to include qualitative research methods when diagnosing skill levels of various students. This way results from qualitative methods might be explained in a better way.

In the future, it might be beneficial for the researches to conduct a 360 evaluation of the students, not just to base their results on self-evaluation tools (like the Profiling tool).

Summary

We can conclude that the Profiling tool can be used for evaluating the improvement of students' skills of critical thinking and problem solving which were introduced to their curricula. In addition, as both graphs showed, all skills have been improved after conducting activities from the LELLE project. We can also emphasize that higher improvement in the sub-skills can be achieved if students have complete the coaching process. LELLE Profiling tool and procedures are excellent instruments to bridge the gap in skill-deficit in our current graduates and to integrate the three core skill-sets into the existing HEI curriculum and its instructional programmes.