

Modelling for Value-added Educational Service Delivery within a First-cycle Degree institution: A Bulgarian Case

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to represent a model for implementing value-added educational service delivery within a first-cycle degree institution in Bulgaria. The model has been elaborated answering two overriding questions: when and how to implement and disseminate venture model, considering both institutional environment and exogenous economic, social and environmental factors and attitudes. Although the question why appears to be rhetorical one, the author has yielded some insights, having unfolded external and internal environment settings as possible futures and their impact on the model demand. Consequently, challenges before the higher education in Bulgaria are to ensure that it has been addressing understanding and skills needed to enable learners to leave and work in a sustainable way and to take a lead in decision-making for sustainable future. By that reasoning the author responds to the when-question, or at what stage to implement the model. The latter question – how – has been envisioned as the essential one of the actual model implication. Approaching the education as a service of intangible actions directed at peoples' mind – both learners' and tutors' – the author represents at whom or what the service is directed, and moreover, at the categories that collectively cover the entire service arena. From profession-oriented educational perspective and by strict manipulation on the variables given, the model has been basically stated on the convergence of three pillars: 1) alert learners' segmentation, 2) curriculum innovation, and 3) education-to-business cooperation. Segmentation of the attentive learners aims at establishing a powerful body of young people who are capable to “broadcast” sustainable education patterns from inside to outside the core. Curriculum innovation has been elaborated to bridge the chasm between theory and practice when collide into real-life context, and to result in performing an educational service for life skills built-up towards sustainable education. For the big challenge in the educational service to be overcome a business model of education-to-business cooperation is to be rehearsed and applied properly.

Key Words: education model, key competences, curriculum innovation, transdisciplinary approach, educational service, first-cycle degree education, business education in Bulgaria

I INTRODUCTION

The paper represents an aspiring venture to build up a model for micro-implementing a value-added educational service into a first-cycle degree institution within the Bulgarian higher educational ecosystem. The model is composed on the grounds of the expressions of two key paradigms – ‘transdisciplinary’ and ‘lifelong learning’.

The model is an attempt to overcome the lack of cross-disciplinary studies in the traditional, monodisciplinary educational system in Bulgaria, upgrading it with a revived demand of cooperation between education and real-life practice. More or less, higher educational institutions focus on studying subjects for their own sake, rather central issues of the times that would emphasize *experience*.

The venture model has been elaborated for the College of Management, Trade and Marketing – Sofia in Bulgaria and respectively delineated around the notion of competence advancing for further learning and professional orientation in such a domain. Hence, a compound of three interrelated processes for developing competences has been designed: by learning, training and mobility. They are perceived as *modus operandi* for competence advancing, and in amalgam they add value to the educational service delivery towards improving the quality of education. Conditioning an environment for the model implementation has been of great importance for a new *venture*-Centre, which has been set up within College's organizational structure. Its operability has been primarily model-implementation-oriented, where curriculum innovations in tutor-student, trainer-student and student-student collaborations are to be appraised in terms of an interdisciplinary modularization towards a transdisciplinary one; and all these – from a lifelong learning perspective. In other words, the model for value-added educational service delivery can be synthesized into its essential form: Integrated Centre for Competence Advancing in terms of Learning, Training and Mobility.

Approaching education as a service of intangible actions directed at peoples' mind – both learners' and tutors' – are represented *at whom* or *what* the service is directed, and moreover, at the categories that collectively cover the entire service arena. From a profession-oriented educational perspective and by strict manipulation on the variables given, the model has been basically stated on the convergence of three pillars: 1) alerting the learners' segmentation, 2) curriculum innovation, and 3) education-to-business cooperation. Segmentation of the attentive learners aims at establishing a powerful body of young people who are capable to "broadcast" the venture model patterns from inside to outside the core. Curriculum innovation has been elaborated to bridge the chasm between theory and practice when they collide in a real-life context, and to result in performing an educational service for business competence advancing towards life skills built up. For the big challenge to be overcome in the educational service, a business model of education-to-business cooperation is to be rehearsed and applied properly, being in cohesion with the previous two pillars of the venture model.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

A question *unobtrusively* transmitted by plenty of perspectives within the business educational ecosystem

and open space is whether there are deep challenges unfolding within the system of higher education in Bulgaria that put it into a state of instability and uncertainty. Considering opportunities and threats of the local institutional environment, exogenous economic, social and environmental factors and existing attitudes, a model towards education-to-business cooperation has been reasonably demanded.

2.1 Driving Forces towards or against Cooperative Education

There is a great amount of analyses and statistical data that provide an overall representation of what is on the educational scene in Bulgaria. Hence, this paper will preferably be oriented towards the understanding of the driving forces brought up, rather studying them. For framing the micro-model, key external driving forces have been figured out.

An important driving force is the demographic trend which resulted in a severe birth rate decline during the last two decades in Bulgaria. There have been identified two crucial periods of downtrend – between 1990-1993 and 1996-1999, which extrapolation nowadays has resulted in about a decade of demand-supply vacuum in the education sector. That has been a period when the key players – institution representatives, teaching staff and students – have been foreseen to play under a case of *human-factor* stagnation – primarily, the student factor and secondly, the teaching staff. The educational service has been envisioned to be redefined as a market offer so that the student factor is to be considered as a limited resource. Consequently, teaching staff mobility has been intensified because of the uneven allocation of habilitated and non-habilitated positions, which has made it a powerful driving force when discussing a pre-modelling stage for framing the value-added educational service.

Another forceful driver that either moves, or pressures implementing and disseminating of a venture model, defined as *eclectic means of knowledge-seeking*, is that higher education is rapidly becoming a commodity rather than a value. Higher educational institutions in Bulgaria – universities and colleges – are part of a 'knowledge industry' full of parochialism and personal rejection of a shared academic dialogue of sense of purpose. Nevertheless, they have the prerogative to apply ethical standards and see beyond financial accounts and statistics. They are furthermore, concerned with "culture" in the broad sense as it affects all people.

Universities and colleges appear to proliferate by means of student number increase. For the academic

year 2006/2007, the number increases by 28,000, with up to 259,000 students within five year period. Alumni completing their studies in universities and specialized higher educational institutions accumulate a growth of 7% or 15,600 students. Compared to the universities, colleges managed to boost their student number with 80 %.

According to the Qualification Framework of Education in Bulgaria, colleges are first cycle degree higher educational institutions that provide *Professional Bachelor* diplomas. Student permeability has become more extended, or the expansion of student numbers towards first cycle basically could call for two essential patterns: 1) an educational model change-over within the local ecosystem, or 2) an institutional amendment under external control.

Has a model been drawn attention to when the term *modern* higher educational institution is assumed, as a part of the ethos of the time? [6]. The conception of the modern higher educational institution, famous for selling products, obsessed with income and responsive to the wishes of the government, typical for the Anglo-Saxon communities, in Bulgaria it has recently been *articulated* by private consulting businesses and training organisations, rather than cogently implemented into the educational infrastructure. This could be evidence that a *demanding educational model* for competence advancing in Bulgaria might be treated as a product of revolutionary educational development, primarily based on curriculum innovation. More or less, Cullingford argues whether such a style of operation would be the result of how institutions see themselves or whether it has been foisted onto them under external control [6]. Alternatively, the institutional amendment could be considered as another perspective for modelling value-added educational service delivery for future [12]. What is called for from this perspective is a change in educational organisational culture that requires subsequent expressions of venture educational models. Thus, culture could be referred to as ‘sustainable education’, a broad term that suggests a holistic educational paradigm concerned with the quality of relationships rather than a product, with emerging rather than predetermined outcomes. In particular, such a change of educational culture requires a deep learning process by educational actors – policy-makers, managers, theorists, researchers and practitioners. Thus, if educational institutions are to play a full and constructive part when micro-implementing, then – as learning organizations – these institutions and their actors are to go through some form of transformative learning experience themselves. In other words, integration of a venture model within higher educational

institutions implies shifts, and the essential one is supposed to be from ‘Teacher-centred approach’ towards ‘Learner-centred approach’, from ‘Institutional, staff-based teaching or learning’ towards ‘Learning with and from outsiders’.

2.2 Technostarters and Third Generation Universities

An indicative example for a model of value-added educational service recently represented into theory and practice appears to be the concept of *Technostarters and Third Generation Universities* [12]. These are business-oriented higher educational institutions that provide “intellectual mergers and acquisitions”, re-setting their micro-models of tutoring and learning towards transdisciplinary forms of knowledge acquisition. Wissema sets forth that universities should develop not only a transdisciplinary approach to education, but also imitate spin-offs, calling them *technostarters* [12]. Technostarters are defined as students or teaching staff members who establish their own technology-based forms of collaboration. The criterion “technology-based” focus on the importance of technology developed in the institution. Students are supposed to be seriously interested in participating and being involved.

Wissema has identified a couple of premises to develop technostarters within institutions [12]. The powerful ones are: commercialisation of knowledge and institution competitiveness. Institutions that follow scientific policy, and where the commercialisation of knowledge is not necessary, technology policy assumes *valorisation* (knowledge is also valued, but not necessarily in commercial terms). Commercialising knowledge used to be a spin-off from scientific work as researchers published articles or gave presentations at conferences, and the industry would use this to apply it to new products. A disadvantage of this system is that it goes too slow while it does not capture all knowledge most of the time. Technostarters help higher educational institutions to *behave* [12] pro-actively when approaching to the commercialising of knowledge. Technostarters strengthen the competitiveness of the institution because of their service as *know-how hubs* on the international scene.

Another argument for technostarters to be supported as a venture educational model is the institutional experience or stage of natural development. Wissema distinguishes a three- phase development: *first* generation, or Medieval university; *second* generation (Humboldt) university that developed around 1800, and *third* generation university, as *cooperation* with industrial research and other public research and

education institutes, financiers, professional service providers. Third generation university (TGU) is considered a sample of academic integrity restoration, which leads to competition for research funding, students and teachers. TGU appears to be a flexible organisational structure where management tasks come back to the researchers themselves. As a consequence, it causes a revision of the faculty as a structural unit in the educational ecosystem, namely in constituting separate schools (*grandes écoles*) *within* the institution *intended for* both highly talented, pre-selected students and highly rated tutors. Moreover, “third generation” educational institutions could provide output rewards by replacing the state of governmental patterns of employment [12].

Could Technostarters be applicably good enough for micro-modelling a value-added educational service delivery within first cycle degree institution? Should colleges be like businesses or should their role as higher educational institutions be to remind us that there is more to life than making money? Or do the fundamental orientations influencing education seek Cullingford’s *behaviourist* or *constructivist* approach to emphasize respectively the goals and outcomes or learning experience; to focus on knowledge acquisition or meaning-making, and studying not just subjects for their own sake, but central issues of the times. Moreover, institutions can either eschew all moral purpose beyond making money for themselves and for their students – who, if successful, will more than pay their due through alumni associations – or may be engaged in the larger moral issues of the time [6].

2.3 Transdisciplinary Paradigm and Lifelong Learning

A defining principle of contemporary education on which its overall system is grounded has become *lifelong learning*. Although it has lost much of its holistic tone, characterised as process whereby human beings question the world in which they live and help to shape a democratic, safe and equitable future, it brings in the vitality of a sustainable education paradigm. From this perspective, J. Blewitt aims to fashion educational opportunities around four ‘pillars’ that contribute towards a mutual understanding between people. These pillars are: ‘Learning to Do’, ‘Learning to Know’, ‘Learning to Be’, and ‘Learning to Live Together’ [2].

Examining the pillars separately is required so that the principles of education could be distinguished and recognized in sustainable way as to serve for educational venture modelling.

2.3.1 Learning to Learn

A dominant rationale of lifelong learning is to raise skill levels and enhance the knowledge base of individuals, so that they may operate more effectively in a fluctuating labour market. This is what J. Blewitt calls *Learning to Do* or ‘Work-based learning.’ Lifelong learning contributes to a growing sense of unease and uncertainty that is worsened by the consequent fragmentation of knowledge and the decontextualization of skills development. Work-based learning has been challenging many educational institutions to find new ways of working. They explore ways in which public and private-sector institutions can ‘embed sustainability into mainstream organisation policy, strategy, practice and procedures’. That is considered to develop individual and organisational ‘capabilities’ that integrate knowledge, skills, personal qualities and understanding in order to be used effectively ‘in response’ to new and changing environment.

The concern with *Learning to Do* raises issues of ability, capability and competence. The concept of ‘action competence’ incorporates conscious intentionality, an awareness of the nature of action and a focus on root causes rather than on symptoms of issues or problems. The accumulation of action competences fosters transformative learning experiences, which, over time, build more sustainable cultures, communities, business and higher educational institutions.

Learning to Know requires individuals to recognize that they are individuals only at the expense of serving connections with wider social and natural worlds. It means being able to connect private troubles to public issues by transgressing personal, class, ethnic or neighbourhood boundaries. ‘Knowing’ is rooted in a series of relationships and modes of engaging in the social and natural worlds that include: *embodied knowing* – experimental and action oriented depending upon physical presence; *symbolic knowing* – mediated by conceptual understanding, including spoken language, images, media and computer-based communications; *embedded knowing* – procedures shaped by practical routines and technology; *encultured knowing* – shared understanding achieved through social relationships and participation in communities of practice.

The *Learning to Be* rationale is founded on literacy. J. Blewitt constitutes literacy as the basis of an active citizenship encompassing life skills, global and development perspectives, and a predisposition to engage with social, civic and environmental affairs that democratizes everyday life [2]. Lifelong learners need space to examine scientism, technical rationality and related lifestyles, discovering alternative ways of thinking, evaluating and doing.

Learning to Live Together is often problem-focused; cooperative; transformative; invariably transdisciplinary and interconnected; creative; experiential; and 'sustainable'. When learning is long term and holistic, learners become self-directed and collaborative. The methodology adopted is a problem-solving learning process.

Learning to Learn is the ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organise one's own learning, including through effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups. This competence includes awareness of one's learning process and needs, identifying available opportunities, and the ability to overcome obstacles in order to learn successfully. This competence means gaining, processing and assimilating new knowledge and skill as well as seeking and making use of guidance. Learning to learn engages learners to build on prior learning and life experiences in order to use and apply knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts: at home, at work, in education and training. Motivation and confidence are crucial to an individual's competence [3].

2.3.2 Transdisciplinary approach

The venture model of a value-added suggestion to educational service delivery has adopted a transdisciplinary approach to the higher education. Especially in Marketing and Management domain, basically a transdisciplinary integrated curriculum *transfuses* to the vision where academic-career training could make individuals better innovators, or better at recognising entrepreneurial opportunities [5]. Moreover, the approach encourages developing a curriculum for graduates that will facilitate opening the "window of entrepreneurial apprenticeship" [11], and it is an entrepreneur-directed approach to education that could be provided in systematic way with respective teaching techniques [9].

A transdisciplinary approach imparts a lifelong learning paradigm recommended by the European Commission within the European Reference Framework [4]. The Commission has envisioned the essential *knowledge, skills* and *attitudes* related to the key competences, one of which is entrepreneurship competence. They are necessary for lifelong learning saturation in the future, and they are to be integrated into secondary and higher education. The Commission states that an individual's ability to turn ideas into action refers to entrepreneurship. It includes creativity, innovation and risk taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to pursue objectives. This could support graduates to acquire essential

understanding across disciplines and within a real-life context, and could underpin them as employees in being aware of the context of their work and being able to seize opportunities. Higher education institutions are considered to evolve from churning out apprentices to producing ready entrepreneurs [5]. Therefore, it has maintained the need for building more specific skills and knowledge within higher educational institutions provided by respective academic approaches, tutoring techniques and syllabi.

3 METHODOLOGY

An initiative for micro-implementing a venture model within a first-cycle degree institution – The College of Management, Trade and Marketing in Sofia, Bulgaria, (MT&M College) – is the establishment of a *space* for advanced educational service delivery. Students there are to be provided with an aggregated educational service based on *experience*-oriented learning by active collaboration with two or more parties that, as a whole, form an indivisible triangle: student – tutor or trainer – business. The triangle of cooperation is supposed to be updated by developing a network of mobility activities in an intra- and inter-regional scope. In this respect, the adding of value to the general monodisciplinary service by its intrinsic upgrading resulted in enhancing the educational service quality from inside-out.

MT&M College has institutionalized an *Integrated Centre for Competence Advancing by Learning, Training and Mobility*. Considering the acronym's literal meaning in the Bulgarian language, it is *THE EYE [OKOTO]*, and as this paper unfolds, it will be intentionally used in its metaphoric context. The acronym itself has been deliberately designed to sound familiar and easy to relate to, a consciously composed colourful image, making the Integrated, or "I" Centre's concept interesting and attractive – something everybody will want to be a part of.

THE EYE (The 'I' Centre) is a "launching base," set-up primarily to promote peer learning instructional methods, and to drive a business model for education-to-business cooperation initially implementing an interdisciplinary-towards- transdisciplinary integrated curriculum. The independent variable in the process of collaboration are the students, or more precisely, *student participation*. By definition it is voluntary, on the grounds of the students' free will and choice to participate. At that stage the institution, as an imposing authority, has been *sustainably* involved by encouraging, rather than enforcing student intentions. Its role is to pre-select those students who have achieved high

grades during their first two semesters of education at the college. Obviously, what is demanded is a student willingness or disposition to collaborate – a crucial premise for implementing the model for value-added service delivery based on *collaborative learning*. Thus, a willingness to collaborate has been considered a readiness for peers to grant and accept authority over each other's work [1]. The selected students are determined by a set of quantitative and qualitative indications, summarized in a 'general competence rate' – objectively and subjectively assessed, so that a homogeneous body of *competent* students are to be selected in a group. The educational process with such a target group is supposed to follow an assigned pace of learning, training and mobility.

Collaborative learning can also challenge the traditional view of teachers' authority and the way in which that authority is expected. Thus, the other party – *tutor or trainer* – have to *take a walk in the student's shoes*. It has to be actively involved in curriculum innovations using marketing approaches taking into account the *consumer* behaviour of the students, from one side, and from another, to articulate the practice into the educational process, if he/she is a trainer, or to update the subject's content towards a transdisciplinary integrated curriculum.

The third party is an important leverage of communication within the triangle of collaboration. It represents a business model of education-to-business cooperation, which appears to be substantial to the unfolding of the value-added service delivery in order to put it into practice within a given time frame.

THE EYE – Competence Advancing or Learning to Look

A corpus of micro-modelling within a first-cycle degree environment has been stated to be a process of Competence Advancing, being considered as a persistent groundwork for advanced learning or learning-to-look. According to the Recommendations of EC, the key competences for lifelong learning are stated on knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context, which are most relevant for life and work in a knowledge-based economy, and that the combination leads people to be more involved in successfully venture model implementation. The key competences are to be personally fulfilled and developed towards active citizenship, social inclusion and employment. Moreover, it is recommended that, having been developed to a level that equips young people for adult life by the end of their initial education and training, competences should be further developed, maintained and updated as part of a lifelong learning.

Competence advancing has been approached to proceed by means of three powerful integrated pillars: by learning, training and mobility, which is actually encapsulated in the title of *THE EYE*.

3.1 Competence advancing by Learning

Learning has been stated by means of tutorials based on an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary integrated curriculum. The conception of the knowledge there is organized around interconnection and interdependence, the multitude of right answers given, and the ambiguity of knowledge [7]. Within the process of individual tutoring in low-number groups of students – process, adjusted towards the best practices – the role of the tutor has been considered to be that of a co-planar and co-learner; the organizing centre of the integrated curriculum is a real-life context and student questions; the role of disciplines – to be identified if desired, but with real-context emphasis.

The process of learning within *THE EYE* has been drawn on developing a culture in which conversations about advancing by learning take place. That view of education requires a cooperative and collaborative approach to learning that looks ahead. According to Collins, cooperative learning may be understood as teachers and learners working together towards a common end; whereas collaborative learning involves each participant's views and actions, helping to decide and influence the nature of the learning outcome. Collaborative learning exhibits many aspects of good learning – namely, 'active and interactive participation, intrinsic motivation, rich communication, trusting relationship and the potential to transform thinking and lives [1].

3.2 Competence advancing by Training

The second pillar of competence advancing – Training – has been developed through an education-to-business micro-model. It is a peculiar way of articulation of J. Blewitt's working-based learning or learning-to-do approach, which shares heuristic approaches to learning, including a negotiated curriculum; action and problem-based learning; holistic and generic outcomes; partnership working; mentoring; and ensuring that learning moves beyond the localized and immediate reflective practice. The model is presented below in several interrelated types [3] [4].

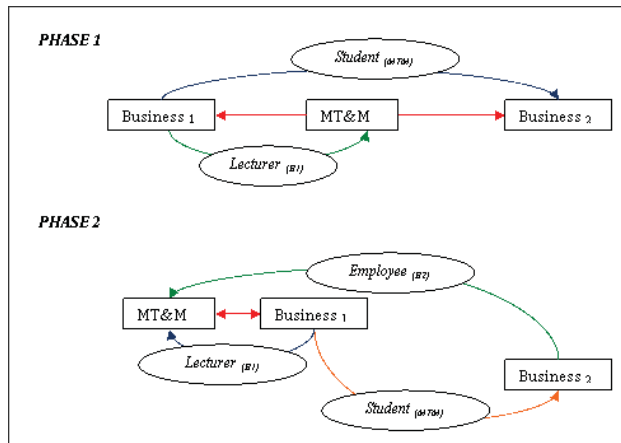
3.2.1 Learning by means of incoming education-to-business cooperation

Demands: MT&M College initiates cooperation with business organizations through participation of prac-

tioners – guest-lecturers – in commonly elaborated *theoretical* training sessions.

Proposal: One-way incoming model of cooperation between the higher educational institution (College) and the business organisation.

Table 1



The benefits for the College during Phase 1 are in providing professional guest-lecturers – practitioners, who *theoretically* train under the motto ‘usually the practice performs in that way’ or ‘decisions are made this way, at that stage’. Training has been carried out in a facilitated study hall within THE EYE. In case of *insufficiency* of achieved competences and advancing during the sessions, needed for the particular operative activity in a business environment, the College is supposed to propose a *customized designed* interdisciplinary syllabus in cooperation with the guest-lecturer.

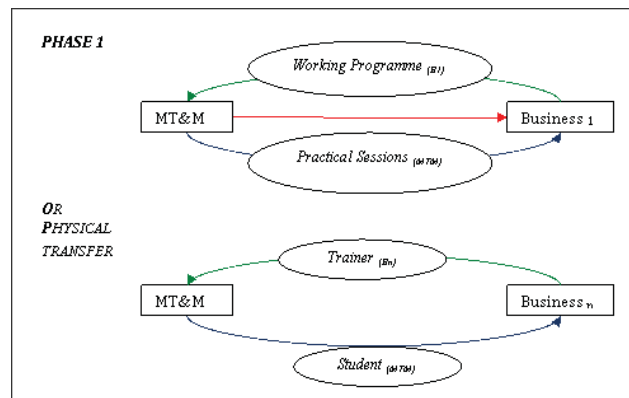
The extent to which the Phase 1 has been successfully conducted should result in building up a reference pattern to interrelate with other businesses. Networking is not necessary.

3.2.2 Training by means of incoming education-to-business cooperation

Demands: E2B Cooperation for practical training sessions with two-way transfer.

Proposal: Model 2 imitates the E2B loop in Model 1 as a point of reference, but it concerns student placements in a real business environment under supervision for accomplishing practical duties, or a *practical* training session. There is a working programme written in advance, and agreed with the College.

Table 2

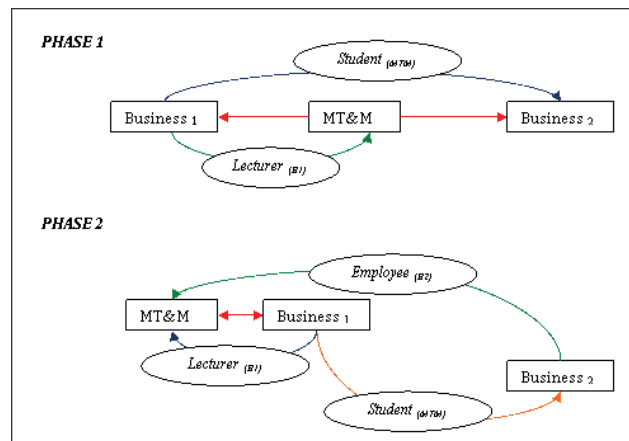


3.2.3 Education-to-business partnership

Demands: MT&M College as a partner and *consultant*. Networking.

Proposal: Model 3 consists of two phases: During Phase 1, the College has been playing the role of service provider for Business 1. The loop is initiated by the College that invites a guest-lecturer from Business 1 (*Lecturer_{B1}*) who provides theoretical training sessions within THE EYE. Trained students could be referred to other *related* Business 2 by Business 1. The College has been networking Business 2 by *related* proposal – guest-lecturer from Business 1 (*Lecturer_{B1}*) to train and refer students for practical training sessions in Business 2.

Table 3



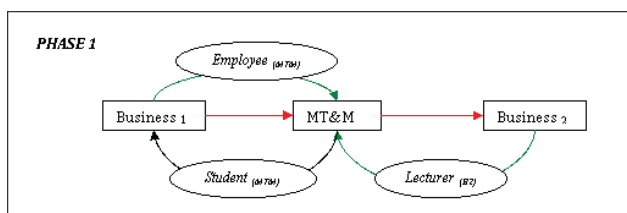
The benefits for the College are primarily in establishing a network of related businesses that provide theoretical training sessions within THE EYE and cooperate with College teaching staff, and consequently – an agreement with Business 1 to authorise Business 2 to establish a cycle of professionally-oriented lifelong learning of its employees, who could be ex-students of MT&M College.

3.2.4 Business assignments of transdisciplinary educational service

Demands: Building up *sustainable* demanding when business demands educational service provision on a transdisciplinary base.

Proposal: the College is an intermediary between two or more related businesses and performs as an educational service provider and a client. In order to deliver trained students for placements in Business 1, the College interrelates to Business 2 to enquire for a needed knowledge carrier.

Table 4



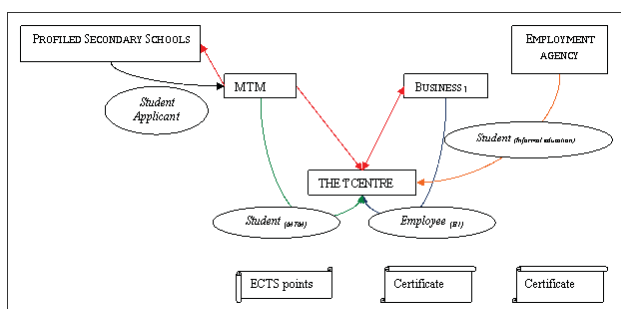
The difference between Model 3 and Model 4 is in the direction of setting up the cooperation: in Model 3 it is from THE EYE, and in Model 4 – on behalf of the business.

3.2.5 Venture Business Model –Student Inflow Planning

Demands: Vertical Integration and setting up sustainable demanding. New configurations of informal education are demanded.

Proposal: The Model represents THE EYE activities in terms of *student inflow planning*: from one side, the business *has been called for* supplying employees (e.g. MT&M College ex-students) for transdisciplinary education, paying for the service or as a sponsorship; from the other side, THE EYE has been setting up partnerships with secondary education.

Table 5



The education model is intended for satisfying primarily the labour market’s needs of educated and competent young people, as well as the lifelong learning of employees (e.g. newly-hired). Hiring responsible, professionally educated and trained young people is to be issued within the HR business policy in collaboration with higher educational institutions. Student learning and training requires time and the resources involved are strategic investments. All that could be provided by education-to-business collaboration.

3.3 Competence advancing by Mobility

Competence advancing by *mobility* has been envisioned to occur within the Erasmus Programme Activities. The first two pillars are encompassed into the third one by means of applying both curriculum innovation and the education-to-business model to an intercultural group of alert students. The value-added point here is the interpretation of J. Blewitt’s ‘Learning to be and to live together’ rationale. Incoming students will participate in theoretical and practical learning sessions. In return, MT&M College students will be able to benefit from such a *domestic* exchange of knowledge, communication and culture. The challenge before the venture model execution is a new term – THE EYE-student. The third pillar expands towards teaching staff mobility. The issue could be elaborated by translating the rationale of tutor-to-student collaboration and updating tutor-to-tutor and tutor-to-trainer collaboration.

4 FURTHER TO BE DONE

The Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area provides descriptors for cycles. Each cycle descriptor offers a generic statement of typical expectations of achievements and abilities with qualifications that represent the end of that cycle. Qualifications at each level in a possible EQF are described in terms of three types of learning outcomes: knowledge; skills; and wider competences described as personal and professional outcomes. In the EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and factual one; skills are described as cognitive (use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments); and competence – in terms of responsibility and autonomy. There are eight levels referring to learning outcomes. Descriptor of the higher education first cycle in the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area agreed by the ministers for higher education at their meeting in Bergen in May 2005 in the framework of

the Bologna process corresponds to the learning outcomes for EQF level 6 [4]. By approaching the design of the EQF, Level 6 has been matched to *the level of achievement* for the purposes of educational service provided in THE EYE.

The accomplishment of the strategic objective – sustainable education implementation and dissemination in middle-term – has been envisioned by adopting Organisational Benchmark, namely:

By 2015, the percentage of alert students, who have been given value-added educational service within The “I” Centre, achieve learning outcomes for EQF level 6, by at least 30% compared to the year 2008, which is the year of its launching.

5 IMPLEMENTING AND DISSEMINATING A MODEL FOR VALUE-ADDED EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY

The academic year 2008/2009 has already met the newly launched Integrated Centre for Competence Advancing, and it is in its experimental phase of “testing the prototype.” The initial group of honoured students being in their third year of the first-cycle degree have been attending lectures in “Managing for Projects and Projecting for Management”. A procedure for service quality assessment has been developed, including qualitative research methods for evaluating student satisfaction. Monitoring has also been foreseen for ongoing sustainable model verification, referring to Norton and Kaplan’s Strategic Maps. It is to encompass supervising, observing, and testing model design, tutor-to-student, trainer-to-student and student-to-student interaction.

The paper provides a useful source of information for academics and practitioners interested in the substance of models for implementing value added educational service within higher educational institutions. The case of a Bulgarian first-cycle degree institution represents an example of curriculum innovation merging experience learning, training within the framework of education-to-business cooperation, and mobility activities under interdisciplinary modularization. Being set up and installed in laboratory conditions, the sustainable education process is anticipated to result in transdisciplinary integrated modules where the interactions are to be real-life-context-emphasized and the tutor’s role is a co-planner and co-learner. Integration of physical attendance, mental communication and inter- and intra-regional exchange has been identified as the driving force of the sustainable model. Moreover, key competence evolution is to be considered as

support of personal fulfilment, social inclusion, active citizenship and employment.

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