PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BY E-LEARNING: EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE
REMOTE INTERNSHIP MODELS

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Summary

In today’s global and multinational business environment, collaboration in virtual teams holds a position in its own right. Students however lack the so needed experience with online working as part of their education and therefore as part of their professional development. For students to gain a first hand experience in online working, remote internships are needed. In particular, remote internships are an instrument for life-long learners to gain practical experience since physical internships are not so common in distance education. The paper discusses the concept of remote internships in comparison to online working situations. Focus will be on both internship collaboration models, as well as how to realize effective remote internships.

Research carried out within the framework of the project Cross Sector Virtual Mobility (CSVM), that facilitated distance education students to enter online working in order to stimulate their employability, gave insight in effective ways to obtain true working experience in remote internships. In order to study this research was carried out in the Virtual Environmental Consultancy (VEC). The VEC is an didactic model in which learning and work experience have been fully integrated in a distance learning environment. The VEC offers a flexible, networked learning environment that resembles an authentic professional situation. Students and teachers working in the VEC carry out real projects for real external clients.

Remote Internships, as an e-learning model of professional development by workplace learning, can bridge the requirements of employer’s and the need for life-long learners to gain practical workplace learning in an professional environment. General solutions for technical, pedagogical, and organizational barriers in remote internships are discussed.

Besides the internship assignments enhanced the students’ understanding of the subject as well as their ability to relate theory to the workplace. Moreover collaborative working between students was good.


Please note: The full paper will be distributed during the presentation.