



SKILL2E: a Proposal to Prepare Students for International Work Placements

Maria Tabuenca Cuevas

Universidad de Alicante (Spain)

maria.tabuenca@ua.es

Language skills have long been thought to be the key to international work placements for students however, what is being done about training students to understand the new culture they will experience during their stay? The Education Faculty at the University of Alicante is participating in the European Project SKILL2E which aims to equip students going on international work placements with cultural competences. In total, there are six European universities which are part of the project that is now in its second year and nearing completion. The project proposes an innovative double loop learning cycle. The first step is the assessment of the students' cultural competences; after that pre-departure training is designed to meet their needs and given at their home institution. Next, the students participate on an online reflection platform using guided questions. This diary is a shared reflective tool among all the participants. Simultaneously, these students are guided at the workplace by a cultural mentor. This colleague is a key figure in the work placement experience. Finally, after the students have returned to their home institution, they are assessed a second time to measure the competence gain. Preliminary results of the SKILL2E proposal illustrate a clear need for cultural training that cannot be ignored for students on international work placements.