Abstract
The article describes the importance of competence-based training and learning in the Job Orientation Training for Businesses and Schools programme (JOBS) in Romania. It focuses on the different areas of competences and their application in the relevant components within the project. From a Swiss perspective the experiences from the implementation of such competence-based programmes are presented as a conclusion for a further development and knowledge transfer.

Keywords: job orientation, career guidance, competences, competence-based training, student-centred learning, teaching material.

1. Job Orientation Training for Businesses and Schools (JOBS)
Since 2010 the Centre for International Projects in Education (IPE) of the Zurich University of Teacher Education has been active in Romania, implementing the JOBS programme in the pilot region of Brașov. IPE has
reacted to the demand formulated by the Romanian stakeholders: bridging the gap between school and labour market and preparing young people in Romania for the up-coming decision about their professional lives. As a second demand, Romanian authorities stated the importance of increasing the attractiveness of the local labour market and strengthening the beliefs of young people and their parents that a successful future does not only have to be sought in academic studies such as management and economy. The Swiss Agency for Development Co-operation (SDC) has taken up the programme which was formerly co-financed by the Lotteriefonds of the Canton of Zurich into their EU-enlargement contribution Thematic Fund programmes from 2012 – 2016.

The JOBS programme combines two elements: integration in the labour market and schooling. It aims to help students in the last years at the gymnasium and the first years of technical college to get a realistic insight into the world of work and the variety of jobs available. At the same time, they learn to recognise their own strengths and competences. The programme offers them the opportunity to gain an overview of possible jobs and studies. By visiting businesses, administrations and public institutions they see what skilled workers and graduates do. It is then up to the students to collect information about job offers nearby and the requirements for different kinds of occupations. JOBS is also a good practice for students to learn how to present themselves successfully to potential employers. In order to reach this goal, a new competence-based cross-curricular approach, adequate teaching and learning methods (task based learning) and a series of seven booklets for students are introduced and a network of involved business partners is set up. JOBS also provides corresponding support for teachers and school counsellors in terms of training, coaching and continuous information exchange via a distance learning platform. The teachers involved not only teach the subject but also actively support and advise the students in performing the tasks defined by JOBS. The experience in the first implementation phase has shown that school pedagogues as well as counsellors play an important role in this innovative teaching and learning approach.

The JOBS programme functions on different levels with different stakeholders: a) development of competence-based teaching and learning

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1 The Lotteriefonds des Kantons Zürich (Lottery Fund of the Canton of Zurich) administers all shares of the profits of the Swisslos sellings. It uses its funds for co-financing national cultural and social activities and projects by non-profit organisations as well as projects supporting cultural, educational and social issues on an international level.
material, b) development and conduction of trainings for teachers and mentors, c) installing of an e-learning platform for nationwide use, d) development of a JOBS website for information purposes for all stakeholders, e) the accreditation and certification process and f) an accompanying baseline-study aiming at identifying the impact of the JOBS learning programme on teachers and students. All these aspects imply high standards on the active initiative to work and learn for the students. Supporting this process and accompanying the students therefore becomes an important element in the coaching and learning support competences of educators.

2. The various competence areas in international projects like JOBS

As stated in the beginning of this article, JOBS uses a competence-based approach in the development of all pedagogical and didactical products and processes such as teaching material, model lessons, trainings for teachers, distance learning opportunities etc. Since the coining of the term ‘competence’ by R.H. White in 1959, the discussion surrounding models of competence, definitions of competence and the measuring of competence has spread across the world (Guerrero et al. 2012). In the Anglo-American region, the use of the term ‘competence’ for the conception of training programmes, curricula and testing procedures was already propagated as early as the 1980s. It was only in the development of the educational standards mentioned at the outset and in the introduction of increased measurements of educational outcome, that the German-speaking world experienced a revival of the term. The most widely known use of the term stems from F.E. Weinert (2001), which the subsequent Klieme-Expertise used as a reference point.

The work undertaken by the Centre for International Projects in Education is based on a framework that assumes ASK (attitudes, skills and knowledge) to be fundamental components of all learning processes. Foundational for the further broadening of the term ‘competence’ as understood within pedagogical collaboration is the assumption that all three areas can be understood as an expression of behaviour or performance. In this way, successful learning processes can be described as an oscillation between abilities (competence) and behaviour (performance) that are expressed in three different areas (Schmid 2013). This design is used for the conception

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2 The Klieme-Expertise (2003) is a survey by appointment of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research on the development of national educational standards in Germany. Eckehart Klieme and other notable German educational researchers have therein discussed and made recommendations on the development and introduction of educational standards in the light of the TIMSS and PISA results. The Klieme-Expertise is often cited in connection with the debate surrounding competence orientation in German-speaking regions.
of competence-based training, at the same time forming the structure for the curriculum development of further education courses (see McCowan and Wegenast, 1995). The combination of overarching so-called “instructional objectives”, namely attitudes, skills and knowledge (ASK) forms the starting point from which a domain can develop (McCowan 1998, 8f). A domain indicates in this usage a set of various different yet interrelated learning objectives. In this sense, competence can be defined using an American definition as being a “state or [a] quality of being adequately or well qualified - a specific range of skill, knowledge, or ability” (ibid., 9). Thus a domain can also be seen as a collection of connected competences. In this model, a competence is described as a collection of numerous specific performance objectives (numerous ASK combinations). So, ‘competence’ as used here equates to an ‘objective’, in other words the attainment of the various dimensions of performance. The JOBS programme bases its work - the construction of training courses and the undertakings in competence development - on the ASK model. In addition, the programme ascribes to the predominant idea of competence and competence oriented teaching as learnable, cognitively rooted skills and abilities that contribute to the successful completion of particular tasks and demands (Lersch 2010a, 7).

To illustrate this, the JOBS programme has got as its core element an exploratory business visit of the students to local companies. There, they gather information about the profession, talk to different workers in different functions and put together their results into a presentation to be done in school. Only if students were able to get to know, practice and understand the skills needed they can complete this task successfully. The skills needed to be cognitively rooted are in this example how to write a guideline for the interview, how to contact a business, how to talk to people, how to record information and how to present their findings.

A domain in the ASK model describes a set of various different competences. A further step would then be the combination of different domains of competences that, for example, one would need for exercising a given profession. So a cluster of domains contains the various competences necessary for a given job. Figure 1 illustrates the ASK model as a basis for conceptualising competence-based training (also used in pedagogical development work) (see McCowan 1998).
Richard McCowan uses this illustration in his explication of competence orientation and the development of competence-based training (1998). In terms of the work undertaken by the IPE, such a simplified illustration provides a useful structural aid when it comes to incorporating the aims that need to be attained into the various performance dimensions of pupils and teachers or other target groups. The ASK model thus described comprises the basis of project work in the conception of ideas and shows itself to be expedient mainly in the clarification of the needs of project partners in the field. Apart from the ASK model as a structural aid used in JOBS, in the context of education and employment it is also important to consider the interconnectedness of competences and the permeability of the various areas of the education system (Pellert 2011, 63). Thus in international collaborative education, competence orientation addresses various dimensions:

- the imparting of subject specific competences to students
- the transmission of cross-curricular competences to students
- the connecting of subject-specific and cross-curricular competences to solve specific problems
- the connecting of subject specific and cross-curricular competences in order to survive and prosper in other areas of life (school - work)
The term ‘competence’ hereby encompasses a further dimension that concerns competence-oriented teaching and learning. It also points to the relevance of the future learning comprehension of students beyond their scholastic careers and calls for the connection between school and the world of work and the acquisition of the needed competences for this. Moreover, this definition of competence never loses sight of the individual, as Pellert remarks, “a focus on the individual thus belongs to competency-orientation. It is important to be aware of the particular competences that a person possesses at any given time, how this person can develop these competences further and which form of support he or she needs in this process.” (Pellert 2011, 62: author’s own translation). Thus, in our usage, competence-orientation is critical for an understanding of teaching and learning as well as pedagogy; it also highlights the function of school in moving students towards “employability” (ibid.). This focus on the individual becomes particularly salient when it comes to assessing acquired competencies. The fear that the shift of focus from input to output in teaching and learning loses sight of the learner and orientates itself solely towards a social criteria or benchmark can thus be allayed (see Reusser 2011). Teaching and learning in a school context must ensure and be conceived in such a way that learning pathways, learning pace and learning objectives help pupils to attain the minimal standards and to acquire the appropriate competences (ibid.). It will be a crucial role of the teachers and counsellors to ensure that the individual student gets the support that is needed by also keeping up a network with all involved people such as parents, other teachers, school psychologists, siblings, peers etc.

3. Career options and transition from school to the workplace

In terms of the JOBS programme - career options and job orientation at the transition point between school and the workplace - the idea of competence on a subject but also general level in its categories becomes evident. Work on the JOBS project in Romania assumes the importance of combining subject-specific and cross-curricular competences or: acquiring competences for life, not only for deciding about a specific job. Thus, cross-curricular competences are acquired in the context of subject teaching and learning processes, as Lersch postulates (Lersch 2010a, 7). The JOBS project ties in with this to connect specialist knowledge about jobs and careers, the world of work, different working models, contextual factors of the home country etc. with examining one’s self and one’s own skills and abilities. By means of task-based learning settings paired with a strong focus on forms of cooperative learning, cross-curricular competences such as teamwork,
criticism communicative competences, flexibility, taking responsibility etc. can be trained (Weidinger, 2012). In other words: young men and women get to know their own competences, should increase their independence and independent learning skills and have the possibility of researching real job opportunities in their own region themselves (Gollob 2011).

The JOBS programme uses school as an actual living social environment in which authentic experiences are made. During the entire cycle of the JOBS programme lasting a full school year, students undertake the task of visiting a local business and collecting information on different jobs, speaking to people and following this, presenting their findings to their fellow students or exhibiting their findings to a wider public in a JOBS fair. Additional cross-curricular competences that are trained have as their focus the areas of performance competence, research competence and presentation competence. It is obvious that supporting all these competences a close cooperation within the teaching staff in a school is needed also aiming at sharing their specialists' knowledge.

If the competence areas of the IPE's career options programme are categorised, four main competence areas become apparent:

– analysis competence,
– specific career orientation competence,
– methodological competence,
– cross-curricular competences such as communication competence, cooperation competence, performance competence, presentation competence.

The competence areas of this career options programme also reflect the three performance dimensions of attitudes, skills and knowledge. Thus the first two competences, analysis competence and specific career options competence mainly connect to the performance dimension of knowledge (and partly also that of skills), whilst methodological competence focuses on the area of skills. In the context of career options, the area of cross-curricular competences usually means a combination of skills and attitudes. The areas overlap and are in many cases not possible to separate. It is better to attempt of an explanatory model that locates the interplay between the necessary competences for students at the transition point between school and workplace. Seeing competences from such a transversal perspective has entered the academic debate and is used by countries - as for example Romania, in the context of trainee teachers - in the following way:
“Being competent implies the ability to transfer, a concept that enables us to state that competence should be regarded also from a transversal perspective. […] a student should acquire the following:
– General competences;
– Field related competences […];
– Methodological competences;
– Communication and relating competences;
– Management competences” (Kelemen 2012, see also Baartman et al. 2011).

How these various competence areas should best complement each other so as to enable students to make appropriate decisions regarding their own career pathways using in-depth analysis of and reflection on their own selves is also the object of present debate. The theories of competence development differ considerably and yet they all advocate an integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes in order for successful acquisition of competences to take place in vocational education (Baartman et al. 2011):

“A common notion of most competence definitions is that it consists of integrated pieces of knowledge, skills and attitudes that can be used to carry out a professional task successfully. Whereas many researchers define competence as the integrated whole of knowledge, skills and attitudes, we postulate that integration should be measured as a learning process and competence as a learning product. These integration processes lead to certain levels of knowledge, skills and attitudes. When measuring competence we can assess the level of such knowledge, skills and attitudes as they are applied together to perform a professional task.” In the field of career options and job orientation, this integration becomes all the more important, as it depends on direct application and trialling of learned competences in the lived reality of the students. The precise ways in which this integration takes place is discussed in the accompanying research. However, one key thing is clear: tasks given should be varied, in order for optimal transfer to take place (ibid.), so that students learn to locate the differences between familiar and new information, ideas and processes and to construct mental models on how these tasks relate to each other. In this context then, competence acquisition delineates a combination of being able to form analogies and being able to be flexible enough to deal with new situations.

4. Experiences and transcultural differences in competence orientation

In the international collaborative work the Centre for International Projects in Education (IPE) is always confronted with an array of varying contextual
frameworks. In the main, these result from very different material conditions in the countries in question (infrastructure, school equipment, access to media and technology, number of teaching and learning resources). These also result from different perceptions of the role of teachers as well as school counsellors. However, they are also the result of different expectations and imaginings of school, work and society. An analysis of these transcultural differences does not consist of merely cataloguing the behaviours or circumstances in a particular country. Rather, the aim is to try to understand the behaviour of the project partner as well as to understand and reflect on one’s own behaviour and attitudes. In the analysis of and reflection on these differences, the IPE uses Geert Hofstede’s theoretical model of values and cultural dimensions (Hofstede 2005/2011). In his elucidations, Hofstede makes clear that “no human can liberate him or herself from the fact that they have to continually apply values that are reduced to norms. A successful intercultural encounter relies on the participants holding on to their own value system. If this isn’t the case, they feel alienated and lose a sense of identity. This sense of identity imparts a feeling of security with which one can openly confront other cultures” (ibid., 477). Thus Hofstede pleads for a continuous reflection on one’s own self and one’s own values. It is not necessary to think, feel and act in exactly the same way as the project partners. For a successful cooperation to take place, a reflection of one’s own values in the mirror held up by those of the partner in question suffices. Thus, an analysis of differences serves to rethink our own cultural values, imaginings and work habits. In the context of competence-based teaching and learning in JOBS the Swiss – or middle European perspective – is delivered into different levels of the school system of Romania. The ways of transfer on the Swiss side as well as the different ways of dealing with the content on the Romanian side are biased by the different school systems’ layout, societal norms and mechanisms of school development and steering processes.

The following analysis of transcultural differences in international project work is to be seen in this light and to be understood as a preliminary collection of impressions about different levels of the school system in Switzerland and Romania as well as different historical processes.

4.1 At the level of teaching staff
One of the most important connecting factors for a successful implementation of project initiatives within the educational systems of projects like JOBS is collaborative work with groups of teachers. They are the ones who pass on competence oriented learning techniques directly to the students. At the
same time, this is also the group who pose the greatest challenge to project implementation of competence orientated teaching and learning. This is due to a range of factors. Firstly, for the work of the Centre for International Projects in Education this is to do with a shift in the culture of teaching and learning towards competence orientation. For many teachers in various regions, this presents a great chance for change. On the one hand, this is due to their education and training which has - more often than not - taken place in a traditional system like the Romanian one in which the teacher takes on the role as transmitter of knowledge through lecturing. The change towards a lesson culture in which the students take on an active role and include their own ideas, needs, backgrounds and in which the emphasis is on learning rather than on instruction, is a shift in the entire professional approach. This uncertainty is often depicted as a concern that a letting go of the reins, a departure form of the position of lecturer would surely lead to a loss of control and ultimately to chaos! This is not new to teachers as well as school counsellors in Romania as well as Switzerland. What is new is the shift from a knowledge-based view of their own role to a skill and competence oriented perspective which allows also time and room for trial. For this reason, the training lead by the Centre for International Projects in Education is in itself competence oriented (see McCowan 1998). Teachers must have the opportunity to experience for themselves how a lesson can be lead in terms of competence orientation. The JOBS implementing team followed this paradigm.

This begins with the formulation of tasks, with carrying out group work or other social forms of learning and carries on to include effective classroom management, evaluation of pupil performance and progress as well as feedback to pupils. An IPE project that encompasses further education for teachers also contributes to this model of learning. Experience gained over the last few years has shown that teachers are able to successfully transfer the approach of competence oriented teaching and learning into their own lessons if they themselves have experienced this model and had the opportunity to trial it and then in a third step to reflect on their work and evaluate it with their trainers. For this reason, the further education programmes always contain an element of model lessons with a subsequent trialling phase and communal reflection phase. Initially, a modelling and copying of the lesson that has been partaken in and discussed takes place. This lesson is carried out with actual school students by experts from the PH Zurich in front of the group of trainee teachers (Gollob 2011).
A further factor that has a strong and positive influence on competence orientation in all project regions is the development of new teaching and learning material and resources. In the JOBS project and its activities in career options and job orientation the IPE uses its own specifically developed teaching and learning material. This material is usually structured in a similar way. It contains learning objectives, details of the various lesson sequences and the competences to be trained thereby, the pedagogical steps to be taken, the particular social form to be used as well as the content information. Conceived specifically for use in collaborative pedagogical development work, these lesson resources and teaching and learning materials take a very pragmatic approach that is directly applicable within the lesson. In terms of didactic methodology, the specifically developed teaching and learning materials use a cognitive-constructivist understanding of learning and work with elements of task-based learning and methods of cooperative learning.

In the teacher’s handbooks, additional didactic advice is given for variation in each lesson or for the successful implementation of a suggested lesson sequence. In the work with teaching professionals in Romania teachers show a very strong tendency - within their everyday work life - to orientate themselves towards available teaching and learning resources. On the one hand this is because additional information is hard to access due to a lack in infrastructure, on the other hand, teachers - just as is the case in Switzerland - tend to use teaching and learning material as the only real point of reference for their lesson planning, thus rendering curricula obsolete. It seems that teachers have the tendency to lack confidence for a change in their own daily routines. This lack in confidence in one’s own competences is a subject of academic research and, as has already been noted, in the transfer process of competences, targeting the group of teachers is the first step that needs to be taken even before work is started with the students (see Spiel/Schober 2002; Hadré/Sullivan 2008). The question could be whether school counsellors could also be contact persons for these kinds of issues for the teaching staff?

A final point of interest in the transfer of competences to teachers is the varying acceptance of the different competence areas amongst teachers themselves. In particular, work with the content focus of career option has shown that teachers are very effective in the competence area of analysis and specific career orientation. The area of methodological competence is also very well accepted and applied by teaching professionals. The more problematic areas are those of cross-curricular competences or life skills. How can these competences be fit into existing subject-specific curricula?
The idea that school should become an environment in which students are able to participate in real decision-making processes, to partake in social life and actually have an impact on school life though their actions is, for teachers often problematic and sometimes difficult to accept. Teachers express this with fears of chaos, loss of discipline and control. The statement often formulated is: “Our students are not ready for this” (Weidinger 2012). In this case too, the steps of demonstrating and copying in terms of the aforementioned model lessons are necessary to allay these fears that are a barrier to this meaningful change in lesson and school culture. Students and teachers do need support in this process.

4.2 At the level of school leadership
The position of school principal or school leadership team is in most project countries connected to a clear delineation in terms of a hierarchy of teaching professionals. In international comparison, school principals - particularly in the countries of (South) Eastern Europe and in contrast to the Swiss model - furnished with an alternative constellation of competences, capacities and duties. They lead a school personally, administratively, content-wise. The importance of including school principals and leadership teams into the implementation programmes of collaborative pedagogical development work shows itself clearly in the fact that they are proven to be pivotal in furthering the long-term anchoring of the project within the school culture. Collaborative work with school principals in the area of competence orientation shows (similarly to school teachers) that the acceptance of the various competence levels - as well as the readiness for self-reflection and putting competence orientation into practice - varies greatly. In this respect, action and decision-making competence as well as social competence pose the biggest challenge. The keyword resulting from the JOBS experience is collaboration within the schools. It is evident that a great amount of trust in one’s own co-workers (the school staff) is needed and in turn this is to do with a basic attitude that arises from the area of personal and social competence. Depending on the type educational system, school leadership in the school cultures of (South) Eastern Europe is connected to control, steering, planning and evaluation. In many cases, the participation of all parties in terms of a school partnership is described as fanciful or – if put into practice – is in many cases just done for pretence.

School principals facilitate a project in competence orientation if they identify the process with the objective. This proves to be the case in the area of career options and job orientation. In the JOBS programme the school principals and school leadership team are the driving force behind networking,
organising the yearly ‘job fair’, developing a recognised certification for the programme and in addition they take on responsibility for the development of competence oriented teaching and learning materials and resources. It is assumed that this works because school leaders partake in further education from the start, as they are important stakeholders in the project concept as a whole. They also have positions with a high degree of responsibility within the project management team. For these school leaders, participation in a project is seen as a prestigious, responsible task connected to proliferation and influence.

Based on experience, we can surmise that on the whole, the concept of competence orientation in the performance dimension of attitudes is the most difficult. However, when it is put into practice it has a great potential for success in changing a school culture.

4.3 At the level of the educational system
International projects for the implementation of competence orientation in schools and lessons are always contingent on the particularities of the educational system of the country in question. In collaborative pedagogical development work, the project activities often take place in regions with a strongly centralised, highly administratively and bureaucratically regulated educational system. Particularly in the countries of new Europe there is a strong element of striving for conforming to EU standards and “modern” elements of educational policy. The “Bologna” process is often referred to in the discourse relating to the implementation of new subjects, higher and further education options, formation and training etc. In Romania there has been a marked increase in international project activities (within the scope of the Eastern EU expansion or in the bilateral agreements such as in Switzerland or Norway). Larger NGOs but also supra-national organisations such as UNICEF, the World Bank or the EU itself also engage in such project activity. In the worst case, this accumulation of development activity leads to a glut of various projects within the educational system and to a loss of overview (often begun but seldom seen through to their conclusion). Frequently within the same country, different projects which cover the same thematic area run in parallel to each other but without any knowledge of each other. As a consequence, this leads not only to an over-saturation in terms of participation, but also a decline in motivation on the part of partner institutions to engage in such projects. In a lot of cases, the fact that the various activities are like puzzle pieces that are isolated from each other within the educational system - lacking synergy and connection - often leads
to a complete lack of sustainable, long-term integration of these multiple projects within the educational system in question. The Centre for International Projects in Education of the PH Zurich has made the experience that a project can be all the more successful if it engages with the educational system at different levels to offer an entire package consisting of training, further education, recognised certification at both of these levels, teaching and learning material etc.

In the case of competence orientation, various grades of impact are evident in the target regions. In Romania there has been great success with the career options and job orientation project “JOBS”, which works on a national level through the Ministry for National Education and the University of Bucarest, but is also strongly anchored in the practical work at a local level through the various regions, schools and teaching staff. However, in other regions this has been a failure. The reason for this lies in the fact that in the past few years after joining the EU, the Romanian educational system has undergone a series of reforms which have put in to place such things as new subjects, new time tables, accreditation systems after Bologna, access to information technology in schools, E-Learning programmes etc. What is still missing in Romania however, are contents for these structures that have been put in place. According to education professionals in the Ministry of Education, the JOBS project came at the exact right moment in order to fill some of the established structures with meaningful content.

Outlook
The analysis of international activities and collaborative pedagogical development projects of the Zurich University of Teacher Education in the field of competence-orientated teaching and learning shows that various competence dimensions take on a range of different characteristics within the JOBS programme. In the conception of projects like JOBS, the IPE of the Zurich University of Teacher Education has chosen a pragmatic approach that orientates itself towards the needs of each particular partner. The search for conditions, success factors, preparation and support for the partner in the implementation of competence-orientated teaching and learning has produced new ideas and concepts of how colleagues in Switzerland who work in other contexts can contribute to capacity building and knowledge transfer. For programmes like JOBS, this search will continue in order to integrate these precise success factors systematically into the process of forming concepts and project planning. Only then will it be possible to support and accompany schools and lessons in partner countries - with the necessary knowledge, developed competences and skills as well as a critical awareness
of our own attitudes and values - towards competence-oriented teaching and learning. For the JOBS programme collaboration between teaching staff, school leadership and parents is crucial for the students’ success in acquiring life skills. School counsellors could have the potential as acting as facilitators and as a bridge between these actors as they have direct access to the students in the JOBS programme.

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