



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

MANUAL FOR THE INTERNSHIP SUPERVISOR

<http://www.internship2industry.eu>



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For a successful internship, **good coaching** on the workplace is needed. Not only the help of the supervisor, but also the reception of the trainees by the **working team** can make a big difference.

Although the supervisor is not always granted much time for this, he has a **very important function** in the success of the internships.



Phase 1 - Before the Internship Period

When the supervisor is able to organize an internship project with challenging **contents** (degree of autonomy, variation and satisfaction), and able to prepare a good **introduction** to the company and a smooth **start** at the work place, it will be a big stimulus for the trainees' motivation.



Phase 2 - During the Internship

The supervisor is not only the contact person in case of problems, but he **supports and guides** the learning process of the trainees (by giving feedback and demonstrating) and it is his leadership style that will motivate them to increase their competences.



Phase 3 – At the End of / after the Internship

The supervisor is the main actor in the process of **assessing** the trainee's competences and in **evaluating** the internship project as a learning process.



Extra Information

There are some extra topics that can be interesting if you want to read something more about your job as a supervisor. They deal with communication, conflict management, leadership styles and body language.



Key Competences

The result of good Vocational Education and Training is that trainees can apply knowledge and are ready to use their skills in a work situation and with the right attitude; we call these key competences.

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1 PHASE 1 BEFORE THE INTERNSHIP PERIOD

1.1 Internship Supervisor Job Description



What?

As an internship supervisor your task is to introduce, accompany and coach the trainees in their work area.

Why?

You are the contact person and intermediary for the trainees, for the internship coordinator and the colleagues at the work place with regard to the evolution and the contents of the training period. The positive evolution of the internship depends very much on your support.

You can read about the advantages of an internship project for your company in **Benefits of a European Internship Project (Belgium)**.

How?

Read the **Checklist – The Job of an Internship Supervisor** and see what is applicable in your situation.

ROLES / COMPETENCES OF AN INTERNSHIP SUPERVISOR:

- Supervisor as a person in charge of the introduction of the trainee
 - Provide practical things, such as company profiles, time schedules, computer access codes, etc.
 - Introduce the work setting, the staff and the clients
 - Explain house rules and safety regulations
- Supervisor as a supporter of the trainee's learning process
 - Take enough time for guidance and assessment of the trainee(s)
 - Be aware of the trainee's professional and personal goals
 - Facilitate the trainee's learning process
 - Be in continuous dialogue with the trainee
- Supervisor as an assessor of the trainee's performance
 - Be familiar with the trainee's goals
 - Give feedback and assess the trainee's performance
 - Promote the trainee's self assessment
- Supervisor as a cultural interpreter
 - Be competent in understanding & speaking a common (foreign) language with the trainee
 - Help the trainee to understand the cultural aspects of work & life in a foreign country
 - Explain reasons and provide justification for the used methods and practices
- Supervisor as a role model
 - Represent a model of a professional worker
 - Encourage and inspire the trainee to have a reflective approach
 - Support the trainee's ethical working
- Working as a colleague
 - Acknowledge the trainee as one of the team
 - Acknowledge that the trainee is a novice, and give due respect and recognition to his/her efforts
 - Remember your own status as an authorised and trained professional

Mind!

Acting as a contact person does not mean that you solve personal problems of the trainees. Always remain neutral and objective!

DOCUMENTS: M2_1.1_D1 Checklist - The Job of an Internship Supervisor.pdf
M2_1.1_D2 Benefits of a European Internship Project (Belgium).pdf

LINK: ETM, Handbook for Work Placement Supervisors (in Care Work), p 8:
<http://hesotenet.edu.hel.fi/english/etm2/supervisors.htm>



1.2 Company and Work Place Information



What?

It is a set of documents that describes the company and the workplace.

Why?

This information has been used to match the candidate's **learning pathway** to the **work place** by the schools or intermediary organisations that are looking for suitable companies and work places for their trainees.

They give the possibility to all parties concerned of exploiting an internship period optimally.

How?

You should read and use the **Company & Work Place Information** form or a document like the **Work Place Description SVS**. You should check if this information, which normally has been given to the trainees, is correct and up to date. Then you can go on to 1.3 and prepare the **Internship Activity Plan**.

Mind!

In some cases there may be not enough time to put everything on paper. In that case it is very important to provide at least **contact details** (mobile nr.) to the trainees so that he can ask for information when he needs it.

DOCUMENT: M1_1.5_D1 Work Place Description SVS (Sweden).pdf

FORM: M1_1.5_F1 Company & Work Place Information.doc

1.3 Internship Activity Plan



What?

You make a plan with a **description of activities**. You take into account the expectations of the sending college and of the trainees.

Why?

It makes clear what (to a certain degree) you want to realise with the trainees during the training period.

How?

In the **Internship Activity Plan** you can make a distinction between:

- Preparatory tasks (planning, organising the work shop, maintenance of parts and tools)
- Executive tasks (installation, diagnosis, repair work)
- Supporting tasks (administration, training, quality management, maintenance, safety & environment).

You can also add the **competences** (professional competences and key or generic competences) needed to realise the expected goals for the internship. Presumably every country or region in Europe has an employer's organisation that designs job competence profiles. You can read more about 'Key Competences for Trainees on Internship' in 5.

Useful hints:

- You make a **survey** of tasks, activities and skills and arrange an order of importance according to the priorities of the company.
- You take into account **prior conditions** of the trainees.
- You limit **periods** and stipulate a realistic **duration** (days, hours) per activity.
- You take into account the often limited means of transport of the trainees (e.g. time schedule of public transport).
- You provide time to **demonstrate** things and techniques, for **consultation** and **feedback**.
- You schedule one or several **moments of assessment**, possibly with the internship coordinator or tutor.
- You provide enough time as such that the trainees can **work** and can **practise** the **assignments**.
- During the consultation you also provide time to **discuss** the completed tasks, to evaluate and to give feedback.

FORM: M1_1.5_F2 Internship Activity Plan.doc

LINK: Examples of job profiles on: <http://www.jobprofiles.org/profiles.htm>



1.4 Practical Arrangements & Preparation



What?

For a good development of the internship it is necessary to avoid improvisations and last minute decisions. Both supervisor and trainees need a clear framework with detailed arrangements.

Why?

A good practical preparation is necessary to increase the efficiency and the effectiveness of the internship and to stimulate the motivation of the supervisor and trainees.

How?

- Use the checklist **The Job of an Internship Supervisor** (1.1) and check your role in:
 - 1° the preparation of the work placement,
 - 2° the reception of the trainees and the info to be provided,
 - 3° the intro to the company
 - 4° the follow up & feedback of the trainees
- Check the **Internship Activity Plan** for the training period (1.3)
- Fill in the **Work Place Risk Analysis** form (if required)
- Also provide a **Practical Information Document** with information about:
 - work clothes,
 - security rules and routines, fire alarm, injury & safety regulations,
 - routines when sick / time off,
 - working hours, times of lunch break, coffee breaks,
 - all necessary phone numbers for the trainees,
 - floor plan of the company (lunch room, toilets),
 - information about (public) transport in the area.

Mind!

Supervision of the trainees has to be guaranteed at all times. In case of illness or absence of the regular supervisor it can be **delegated** to a colleague. Then you map out the job responsibilities in advance, define the limits of responsibility and powers. Knowledge, skills and experience in internship projects is necessary.

Remember never to delegate without giving feedback.

FORM: M2_1.4_F1 Work Place Risk Analysis.doc

LINK: Practicalities - Manual for the Internship Coordinator
<http://www.internship2industry.eu/coordinators/eng/1-before-the-internship/1.6/>

2 PHASE 2 DURING THE INTERNSHIP

2.1 The General Introduction to the Company



What?

It is the **first contact** of the trainees with their work place. It is generally a formal moment and covers all activities at the arrival of the trainees on the work place.

Why?

For the trainees the first impression of the work place and staff is very important. A warm welcome in the work place will help the trainees overcome their initial nervousness.

How?

In order to help the trainees through the orientation period, the supervisor should:

1. Describe the structure of the **company**, its principles and philosophy.
2. Explain the **work schedule** and the **tasks** of the different staff members in the team.
3. Explain the **Internship Activity Plan** of the trainees. Distribute a brochure or an organization chart of the company, as well as a **practical information document** with working hours, necessary phone numbers for the trainees etc. (cf. 1.4).
4. Explain "**the house rules**" and also give these in written form (English or another language).
5. Give information about **safety** regulations. Appropriate clothing / safety shoes will be provided etc. If so required, you will have to distribute a **Work Place Risk Analysis** form.
6. Check if any **documents (Internship Agreement)** have to be filled in or signed.
7. Clarify **regulations** and how to act in **emergency** situations (*company procedures*).
8. Explain the work procedures and how the **supervision** will work out in practice (making appointments). Inform the trainees how many formal assessment conversations you are going to have.
9. Explain and show **equipment**.

These items are described more detailed in **Checklist for the Trainee: Introduction to the Company**

When the trainees have no more questions about all this, show **the premises**: the main building, workshops, changing rooms and facilities for different purposes.

The practical things to be organised may also include possible visits to other work places or units.

Mind!

The trainees can be really showered with information.. Put information as much as possible **on paper**: a well-structured document prevents confusion and misunderstanding.

Operating in a foreign language and in a new culture may be very confusing. In the beginning, check if the trainees **understand** you. The trainees should be urged to **ask questions** about anything that is not clear. Constant support and encouragement are vital for a positive working relationship.

DOCUMENT: M2_2.1_D1 Checklist for the Trainee - Introduction to the Company.pdf

LINK: ETM, Handbook for Work Placement Supervisors (in Care Work), p 10-11:
<http://hesotenet.edu.hel.fi/english/etm2/supervisors.htm>



2.2 The Introductory Interview



What?

This is the first live contact between you and the trainees.

As a supervisor you want to know **what the trainees expect**, you are probing expectations.

On the other hand you express **your own expectations** and check the reaction of the trainees.

Why?

Here you get the important **first impression** of each other. A good introductory conversation works motivating for the two parties.

How?

You **invite** the trainees and stipulate the date, hour, address and exact place in the company, possibly with the required tools or clothing.

You read the documents of the sending organisation with the trainees and **sign the Internship Agreement**.

You ask questions about the expectations of the trainees and try to match them with your own expectations.

- When you ask **open questions**, answers can be very broad and you can get a lot of information. e.g. *Why did you apply for an internship abroad?*
- When you ask **closed questions** (e.g. yes/no-answers) you can **verify** something or get to know a clear opinion. e.g. *Do you like working in a team?*

A list of things a trainee usually expects:

- Get to know daily life in a company,
- Be practically busy,
- Experience modern techniques,
- Review and try out their own knowledge and skills,
- Experience the difference between the requirements in training and in a company,
- Examine if the chosen training is the most suitable,
- Carry out tasks with the support of a professional,
- Put school knowledge into practice,
- Learn a foreign language,
- Be treated fairly and friendly!
- Get clear and simple answers in connection with working life,
- Build a circle of friends, be part of a team,
- Have a good time in a foreign country.

You also let the trainees ask questions. Give as **specific** an answer as possible. This gives a feeling of security and works motivating.

Mind!

Listening to the expectations of the trainees doesn't mean you have to make things the way the trainees want them and neglect the **objectives** of the internship.

2.3 Giving Feedback



What?

You give honest, personal information to the trainees concerning how **your impression** is about their behaviour or performance.

Feedback is a constant process during the internship and helps to **improve** the performance of the trainees.

Why?

By means of feedback the trainees can determine how close they are to the **intended outcome** of the internship.

Feedback is one of the **most important** matters in supervising.

How?

<i>Giving feedback should be:</i>	<i>Giving feedback should not be:</i>
Constructive and aimed at improving performance in the future, suggesting positive alternatives, looking forward.	A way to express disappointment and anger. Only looking backward.
Specific , about behaviour, about facts related to the job and related to learning, about what the trainees can do about it.	Vague , about the behaviour of the trainees in general, about many different things at the same time or about things he can't change.
Focused on the work: e.g. <i>"What you did with that machine this morning could have caused these problems."</i> So: play the ball, not the man!	Focused on the person , using words like <i>"You are a stupid person."</i> <i>"You are always..."</i> or <i>"You never do..."</i>
Calm , describing possible (bad) consequences of behaviour with encouragement to learn and do better next time.	Angry , harsh, discouraging, emotional, only repeating what went wrong.
Two-way communication, supporting the trainees in evaluating themselves and finding their own way in solving problems.	One-way communication, starting from the idea that the supervisor knows what is best for the trainees.
Short but frequently (not just when things go wrong) and immediately after behaviour or the performance and direct.	Long after the problem occurred or by surprise.

Mind!

With regular (positive) feedback from the supervisor a trainee can climb high on **The competence Ladder**. This tool can make people aware of their level of (in)competence.

DOCUMENT: M2_2.3_D1 The Competence Ladder.pdf

LINK: Tutoring: Introduction & Follow-up on the Workplace - Manual for the Internship Coordinator
<http://www.internship2industry.eu/coordinators/eng/2-during-the-internship/2.2/>



2.4 Demonstrating



What?

You offer concrete information in a **visual, graphical way** and you give the necessary oral explanation.

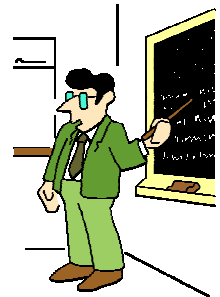
Why?

A picture says more than a thousand words! Trainees with pragmatic and active learning styles (see 2.5 Learning Styles) need very **visual demonstrations**.

It works also motivating when the trainees understand things immediately.

How?

- **Visualize** your manner of thinking, your analysis of a problem.
- Ensure a clear **structure** with a logical order; show the steps in a process.
- Work in **phases** if necessary.
- **Introduce** each phase and focus on the most important points.
- Give a short **summary** after each phase.
- Take care that:
 - the trainees can see the process well,
 - the trainees can hear the explanation well,
 - the trainees understand the explanation,
 - the number of phases and operations can be overlooked,
 - the demonstration is not too complicated.
- Give a **summary of all phases** after the complete demonstration



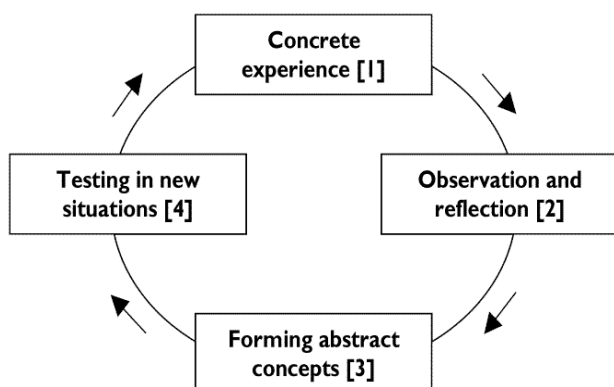
Mind!

Always check if the trainees **understand** what you have been demonstrating or explaining.

2.5 Learning Styles



What?



People usually have their own preferences in one of the four learning styles. The learning theory of David Kolb distinguishes 4 types of learning:

- 1) **From Concrete Experience (CE),**
- 2) **From Reflective Observation (RO),**
- 3) **From Abstract Conceptualisation (AC),**
- 4) **From Active Experimentation (AE),** testing new concepts in new situations.

It's called "the learning cycle" because we often need to go around the wheel, **experience – observe and reflect - analyse - test**, to be able to perform a new skill.

Why?

Learning in the workplace is an essential component of professional training. It is important that the supervisor **helps the trainees understand** their learning process and try other learning styles in order to progress.

How?

If the trainees prefer "learning by doing", the supervisor should try to let them test and try **different tasks** already from the beginning.

This method could, however, make "reflective" trainees a little **scared**, since they prefer to observe you performing the tasks before they try.

As the work placement period proceeds and evolves, you can and should allow more room for the trainees to work independently in new situations. The best guide to know when such a point has been reached is your experience as a supervisor.

Mind!

Supervisors often teach in the same style as they prefer to learn. This style might not be the same as the trainee's.

FORM: M2_2.5_F1 Learning Styles Questionnaire.doc

LINKS: David A. KOLB on experiential learning, <http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-explrn.htm>

ETM, Handbook for Work Placement Supervisors (in Care Work), p 13-14:
<http://www.hesote.edu.hel.fi/english/projects/etm/>

3 PHASE 3 AT THE END OF / AFTER THE INTERNSHIP

3.1 **Assessment Conversation (with the trainees) (and/or the coordinator/ tutor of the sending/receiving partner)**



What?

It is a conversation between you and the trainees in order to evaluate their performance during the internship period.

Why?

It provides an opinion concerning the strengths and weaknesses of the trainees with a view to their further training.

The result may be that the sending/receiving partner will give other directions to future internship projects (cf. 3.2).

How?

- **Preparation of the assessment conversation**

- You inform the trainees concerning this conversation (When? What? How?).
- Both you and the trainees prepare the evaluation points on the basis of previous evaluation conversations or feedback.
- You indicate for each of the tasks what was the quality of the work done, the results they achieved.
- You take into account the initial situation of the trainees.
- You note bottleneck points/problems, e.g. when you think something has been a bit problematic or difficult for the trainees.
- You note which additional tasks the trainees had to do that were not in the original description.

- **Description of the assessment conversation**

- You start the conversation: explain goals and working methods again.
- You possibly evaluate the marks using an assessment form.
- You give sufficient time to speak about every point, listen, ask questions, summarise.
- You ensure that you can motivate your answer each time with examples.
- You evaluate the reached level per item by comparing scores with the initial expectations.
- You make an overall evaluation.
- You express expectations for the continuation of the internship or for the next training period.

Mind!

Be objective; don't be influenced by prejudices, sympathy or antipathy.

At this stage the internship supervisor also needs to fill in some official documents, e.g. **Europass Mobility** (explained in D1 How to fill in the Europass Mobility) or an **Internship Logbook** or **Trainee's Folder**.

DOCUMENT: M2_3.1_D1 How to Fill in the Europass Mobility.pdf
M2_3.1_D2 Example Europass Mobility GB.pdf

FORM: M1_2.2_F1 Trainee's Folder (example Catalonia).doc
M1_2.2_F2 Internship Logbook & Assessment Form (Belgium).doc
M1_3.1_F2 Internship Assessment of the Trainee (Sweden).doc

LINK: The Trainee's report and Assessment – Manual for the Internship Coordinator
<http://www.internship2industry.eu/coordinators/eng/3-after-the-internship/3.1/>

3.2 Evaluation of the Internship Process (with the team) (if possible with the coordinator/ tutor of the sending/receiving partner)



What?

You map out, possibly with colleagues, the trainees and the internship tutor, what (competences) they learned during the training period, and what the possible improvements in the internship process are.

You judge the quality, evaluate whether the internship was worth doing (if there was any added value) and write a report.

Why?

It helps supervisors and coordinators in adjusting and improving or transforming the organisation of the next internship.

Especially with a written report, it can be a reference to plan the next internship project better.

It is also a stimulating step in the learning process when the trainees are involved: this way he sees the full importance of the internship period.

How?

Possible items for evaluation are:

1. Was the **matching** of the candidate and the workplace OK?
2. What remarks did **the trainees** give on their assessment?
3. Did the internship stimulate the trainees to moments of **independent** learning and/or training?
4. Training: are adjustments necessary in function of a better **connection** between the industrial sector and training (technical college, training centre) and/or education in their own region?
5. The practical **organisation** of the internship: did anything go wrong?
6. The role of the **supervisor**: did he meet the expectations of the sending/receiving organisation?
7. The **timing** of the internship: when is the best period?
8. The planning of the internship within the **learning pathway** of the candidate.
9. Questions with regard to the aim of the internship activities: focus on **key competences** (e.g. other rhythm, more stress, social skills), focus on learning to know **new equipment** or train known techniques.
10. Looking for **new internship work places** for acquiring and/or learning specific basic competences, a module, an entire training; optimise a network of internship providers.

- Points of attention: What have we learned? - What can be done better next time?

Mind!

Find a **balance** between positive and negative, between strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats!

LINKS: Evaluation and Assessment of the Internship process - Manual for the Internship Coordinator
<http://www.internship2industry.eu/coordinators/eng/3-after-the-internship/3.2/>

The **Excellence Model of the European Foundation for Quality Management**, (EFQM) could be used here: <http://ww1.efqm.org/en/>

This is a strategic model that offers tools to strive for excellence, rather than to a quality label. It is a tool for self-assessment, and has no binding, certifying aim.

Also a SWOT-analysis is a possible tool to evaluate the items:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SWOT_analysis

4 EXTRA INFORMATION

4.1 Intercultural Communication



What?

Every person is unique, because of his/her origin, education, personal course of life and professional career. The differences of every individual have an influence on relationships and communication with others. What should we have in mind concerning these differences?

Why?

By having an eye for differences, you:

- reduce prejudices,
- prevent misunderstandings, conflicts,
- avoid that one offends each other,
- make mutual appreciation possible and reinforce it,
- have eye for the strengths and competences of the individual and plan the internship on that basis.

It is essential that you are very patient with trainees who have poor language skills. Words and expressions, which you think are easy to understand, can have different meanings in other cultures.

How?

1. Slow down when you speak to new trainees.
2. Separate questions: try not to ask double questions.
3. Avoid negative questions: they can cause misunderstandings.
4. Take turns to talk and then listen to the response.
5. Recommend your trainees to write down the points for checking and understanding.
6. Be supportive: encourage and inspire everybody to speak.
7. Check understanding: never assume the other party has understood what you meant.
8. Avoid slang and dialect: even the most well educated foreigner will not understand you.
9. Make the humour appropriate. Think if your joke will be understood in the foreign culture.
10. Maintain etiquette.

You can read the complete text in the document [Tips for Managing Intercultural Communication](#).¹

Mind!

Do not only take the cultural context into account, but pay attention to the total individual personality.

DOCUMENT: M2_4.1_D1_Tips_for_Managing_Intercultural_Communication.pdf

¹ Olga E. Lomakina, Volgograd State University, Russia: *Developing Cultural Awareness of University students in Russia*, lolga@vqi.volsu.ru



4.2 Dealing with Conflicts



What?

Conflicts are normal in (professional) life. A conflict is a problematic situation between at least two parties, where **each party wishes its own interest** will be fulfilled and thinks that this will happen at the cost of the other.

Why?

It is advisable to tackle conflicts rapidly. The supervisor understands the art of preventing the escalation by, in a professional manner, putting the problems open to discussion.

How?

• **BASIC RULES**

- Remain **calm!**
- Find a suitable place where you can **sit down and talk**.
- **Listen** to what the trainees say and try and pick up any underlying causes of unhappiness or stress.
- **Question** the trainees in a calm way, put them at ease and give him the chance to speak freely.
- **Say in other words** what the trainee said so that problems can be seen in a different way.
- Focus on what would be a reasonable outcome **for everyone!**

• **THREE TYPES OF CONFLICT:**

The supervisor can be an outsider or one of the two parties in the conflict (with the trainees, a colleague, a superior, an outsider), and can be involved directly or indirectly.

- **The conflict remains limited to a disagreement: talk it over!**
- **The supervisor has been directly involved:**
 - Both: let off steam and put emotions in words;
 - Both: say what the error of the other is;
 - Both: say very concretely what should be changed;
 - Together: negotiate to what both are prepared;
 - Together: make arrangements and possibly fix these.
- **The supervisor has been indirectly involved:**
 - Exert your power, your influence;
 - Arbitrate; call upon laws, appointments, principles and traditions;
 - Mediate. When you try to mediate, the bottleneck is often the **beginning of the conversation**: one of the parties does not wish to talk. Try the following arguments:
 - "What if we do not talk?"
 - "It's not a question of right or wrong, but of working together."
 - "Cooperating professionally doesn't need to be love."



Mind!

Prevention is better than cure: you can avoid an escalation. It is easier to prevent a conflict:

- in a culture of openness and feedback,
- if all goes well in communication.

LINK: Interesting site on workplace mediation: www.acas.org.uk



4.3 Leadership styles

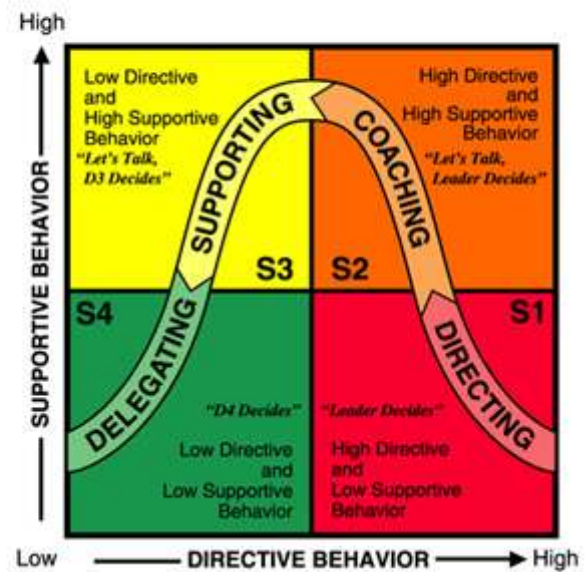


What?

To provide the right sort of guidance to the trainees at a particular point in time a **leadership style that fits the context** (= situational leadership) can be chosen.

There are 4 basic styles of leadership available to the supervisor:

- ❑ **Directing:** the supervisor defines the tasks of the trainees and closely supervises them. The supervisor makes decisions. Communication is one-way.
- ❑ **Coaching:** the supervisor defines the tasks of the trainees. He listens to suggestions by the trainees. Communication is more two-way.
- ❑ **Supporting:** the trainees are allowed to make small day-to-day decisions. The supervisor listens to the trainees and helps them.
- ❑ **Delegating:** the supervisor is involved in the decisions, but control is with the trainees.



Why?

You can raise the development and the feeling of independence and self-assuredness of the trainees by **gradually moving** from a directive to a more supportive leadership style.

How?

The interaction and cooperation between the supervisor and the trainees is at its most intense in the **beginning** of the work internship period.

Towards the **end of the period**, the trainees' work becomes more independent and the supervisor can delegate things and withdraw more into the background.

Mind!

If the trainees are **not committed** to training or motivated, you may be forced to adopt a more directive learning style throughout the internship.

Be aware of cultural differences in leadership styles.

LINKS:

Famous Models – Situational Leadership

<http://www.chimeraconsulting.com/sitleader.htm>

The Leadership Difference

<http://www.kenblanchard.com>

Situational Leadership

http://www.12manage.com/methods_blanchard_situational_leadership.html



4.4 Understanding Body Language



What?

Body language is **non-verbal communication** by means of the body. Although they are generally not aware of it, many people send and receive non-verbal signals all the time.

You communicate:

- by eye contact,
- with your facial expression,
- by your body attitude,
- with gestures,
- by the way you move.



Why?

Some researchers put the level of non-verbal communication very high. According to the communication study '*Silent Messages*' by Mehrabian only 7 percent of communication comes from spoken words. The tone of voice and body language of a person can be more important than the actual words said.

How?

- One of the most basic body-language signals is when a person **crosses his or her arms across the chest**. This can indicate that a person is putting up an unconscious barrier between themselves and others. In a serious or confrontational situation, it can mean that a person is expressing opposition.
- **Consistent eye contact** can indicate that a person is thinking positively of what the speaker is saying. It can also mean that the other person doesn't trust the speaker enough to "take his eyes off" the speaker.
- **Lack of eye contact** can indicate negativity. Eye contact is **often a secondary and misleading gesture** because we are taught from an early age to make eye contact when speaking.
- Disbelief is often indicated by **turning away the eyes**, or by **touching the ear** or scratching the chin. When a person is not convinced by what someone is saying, the attention invariably wanders, and the eyes will stare away for an extended period.
- Boredom is indicated by the **head tilting to one side**, or by the eyes looking straight at the speaker but becoming slightly unfocused.
- Dishonesty or the act of holding back information can sometimes be indicated by **touching the face** during conversation.

Mind!

In the contact with the trainees it is impossible not to communicate because there is always spontaneous, inevitable body language!

But: use your common sense! It is often difficult to interpret body language!

LINKS:

About body language:

<http://www.management.eku.edu/ROBERSON/320/GlobalHR/gestures.htm>

About '*Silent Messages*' by Mehrabian: <http://www.kaaj.com/psych/smorder.html>



5 KEY COMPETENCES FOR TRAINEES ON INTERNSHIP



KNOWLEDGE, what you must know

- Professional knowledge: understanding the basic techniques in your learning pathway:.

SKILLS: what you must be able to do, in fact the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. Skills are described as cognitive or practical.

- Practical skills typical for your learning pathway: ability to apply them on an independent basis.
- Research skills: finding and processing data (also on the internet).
- Technical analysis and problem-solving skills: be able to plan your work, choose the correct materials and tools, work in a systematic way from problem analysis to finding possible solutions to choosing the correct final solution.
- Critical and reflective thinking and acting (be able to make the correct choices).
- Language skills: be able to communicate (speaking – listening – writing - reading) in a foreign language.
- Communicative skills (including assertiveness and the ability to express yourself).

ATTITUDES: what kind of person you should be

- Order, punctuality and work speed (capacity to adapt to working regulations and conditions, take all necessary documents with you, be disciplined, be on time).
- Motivation: attention and concentration, interest in learning new things and curiosity, not give up in difficult situations, independent working and studying, commitment.
- Finishing off: execute an assignment completely and properly, understanding the importance of quality control.
- Respect, positive attitude (tolerance, courtesy, decent language, no bullying, acceptance of authority, respect for multiculturalism, care for material).
- Social behaviour, working in a group (attitude towards co-workers, friendliness, cooperation, team spirit, honesty, being open to equal opportunities).
- Ability to take initiative, act independently.
- Flexibility, creativity and inventiveness.



“Competence” means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal and/or methodological abilities (*commonly called attitudes*), in work or study situations and in professional and personal development.

LINKS:

The European Qualifications Framework:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/eqf/leaflet_en.pdf

Also read Annex 1 of the official EQF framework text:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eqf/rec08_en.pdf