



# Mobility Learning Suite Chapter 3



## How to Integrate the LEVEL5 approach in a Mobility Learning Activity

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# 1. LEVEL5 as Holistic Informal Learning approach

The LEVEL5 system is more than a validation tool. It can be used as central instrument of an holistic competence based learning approach. Insofar it serves both as a planning tool for learning arrangements outside formal institutions (e.g. in mobility, volunteering, civic education but also in learning at the workplace, internships and practice phases in apprenticeships).

The learning is not based on a formal (standardised) learning objective including curriculum and instructional design models but on a simple circular process description (Plan – Do – Check (or Think-Act-Look), Fig. 3) known from all relevant management systems. So called Informal Learning Patterns support the learning providers who may rather act as counsellors or leaning companion than as teaching staff. This concept reflects the NEW WAY of learning which is essential to enable the learner to organise his/her learning in a self-sustainable way.



Fig. 1: Interlinking Informal Learning Design (Plan – Do – Check) with validation of personal and social competences with LEVEL5

The description of the procedure is subject of chapter 3 of this manual and includes an exemplary case from mobility learning. The informal learning patterns are organised in an inventory (open catalogue) representing different learning situations and arrangements that may support the acquisition of different learning social and personal competences and propose suitable assessment instruments.

## 2 How to integrate LEVEL5 in the Mobility Learning Activity

### 2.1 Validating learning in informal and non-formal learning actions

Acquisition of personal, social and organisational competences often happens as an **informal** way of learning.

Therefore **formal** educational *planning* and *assessment* processes (like in school, university or formal vocational education) are neither practicable nor desirable here.

Development of personal and social competences is merely a side-effect of taking action.

Hence informal learning actions are not primarily oriented towards the achievement of formal “*learning objectives*” but rather work along “*action related objectives*” (e.g. to support somebody).

Consequently the “LEVEL5-approach” is also based on an *action* related management approach.

### 2.2 Basic procedural steps

LEVEL5 is grounded on a cyclic procedure<sup>1</sup>.

With this, the LEVEL5 methodology works along the basic principles of all modern management systems<sup>2</sup>.

Figure 2 shows the (quality) management circle applied in formal education.

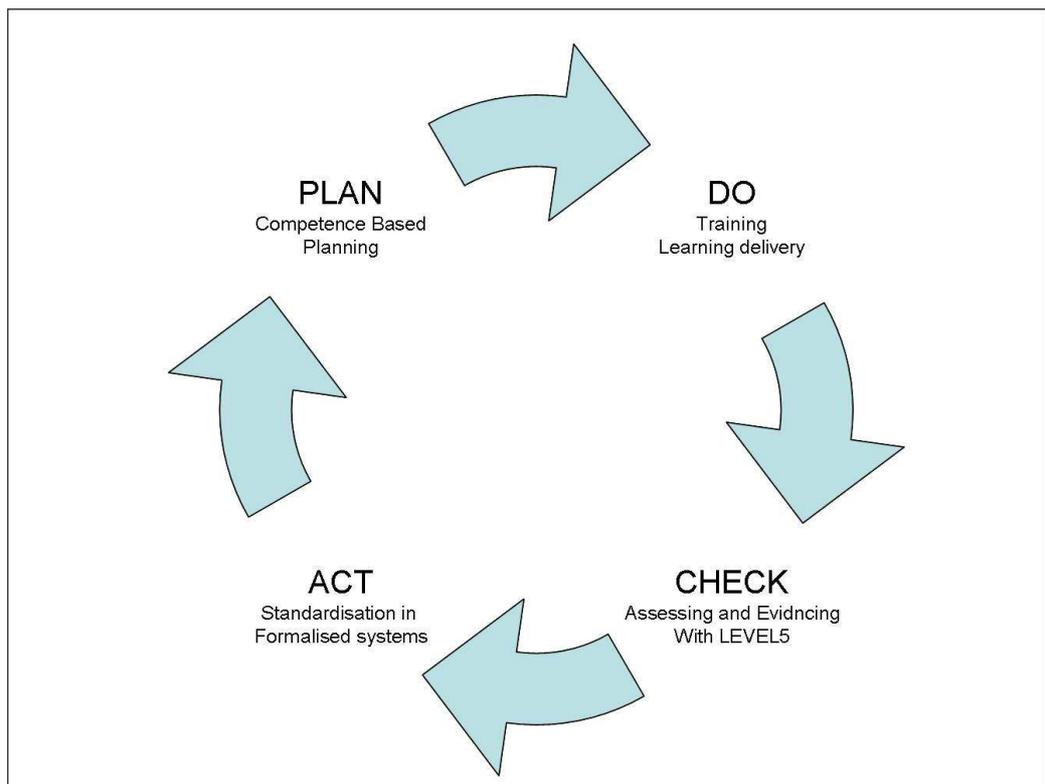


Fig. 2: PDCA management circle in formal education

<sup>1</sup> Well known for instance in all modern process, environmental and quality management approaches

<sup>2</sup> E.g. the so called PDCA circle

With the conversion into informal learning the fourth “ACT”-step becomes superfluous since a standardisation is in most cases neither useful nor meaningful.

In a planned informal/non-formal learning setting<sup>3</sup>, however, the first three steps remain essential which leads to a simplified circle (Figure 3):

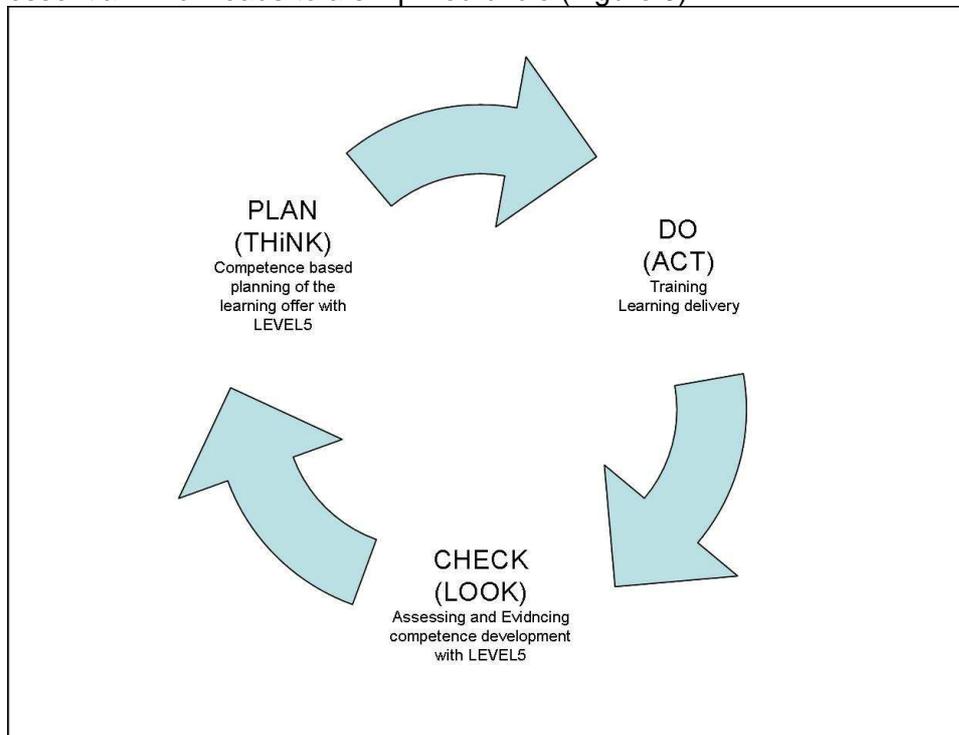


Fig. 3: Think-Act-Look management circle<sup>4</sup> adapted to non-formalised learning

In both cases the LEVEL5 system plays a prominent role in the holistic learning system. The validation of competence developments is not only an ex-post assessment but it is the cornerstone of a holistic learning system for volunteering actions.

Figure 4 shows how the 5-step procedure of LEVEL5 is implemented in the simplified Think-Act- Look- cycle.

LEVEL5 steps 1-2 (project description and topic creation (selection from the LEVEL5-inventory)) are representing the “Think” phase. Here we reflect about important project issues and think about which competence the learner might acquire. This topic will be substantiated and further developed to a description of a competence that may be acquired during the informal learning phase. This output of this step is a first reference system, e.g. on teamwork, autonomy, intercultural communication etc.<sup>5</sup>.

The “ACT” stage of the action circle consists on the one hand on the learning delivery.

<sup>3</sup> Independent from the definition of informal or non-formal learning, excluding incidental learning, there are different learning environments, e.g. learning on the job, in mobility, in volunteering, in mentoring but also in any kind of not formalised courses that do not exclusively aim at the acquisition of job-related competences.

<sup>4</sup> This circle is identical to the Look-Think-Act cycle developed by Kurt Lewin in the framework of Action Research

<sup>5</sup> Please find pre-formatted reference systems in the annex.

This learning is as diverse as the different settings in volunteering – it cannot be standardised like in formal education.

However, it can be influenced, it can be modified, planned and improved by simple learning “patterns” that will be presented below.

In the “ACT”-stage, the volunteering and the learning experience therein takes place. Consequently also the assessment is situated in this phase.

The learning, the setting and the questions around the aspired competences determine the assessment “system”. For further reading we recommend the SEALLL project publication<sup>6</sup> containing a repository and guidelines to self evaluation and assessment in LLL.

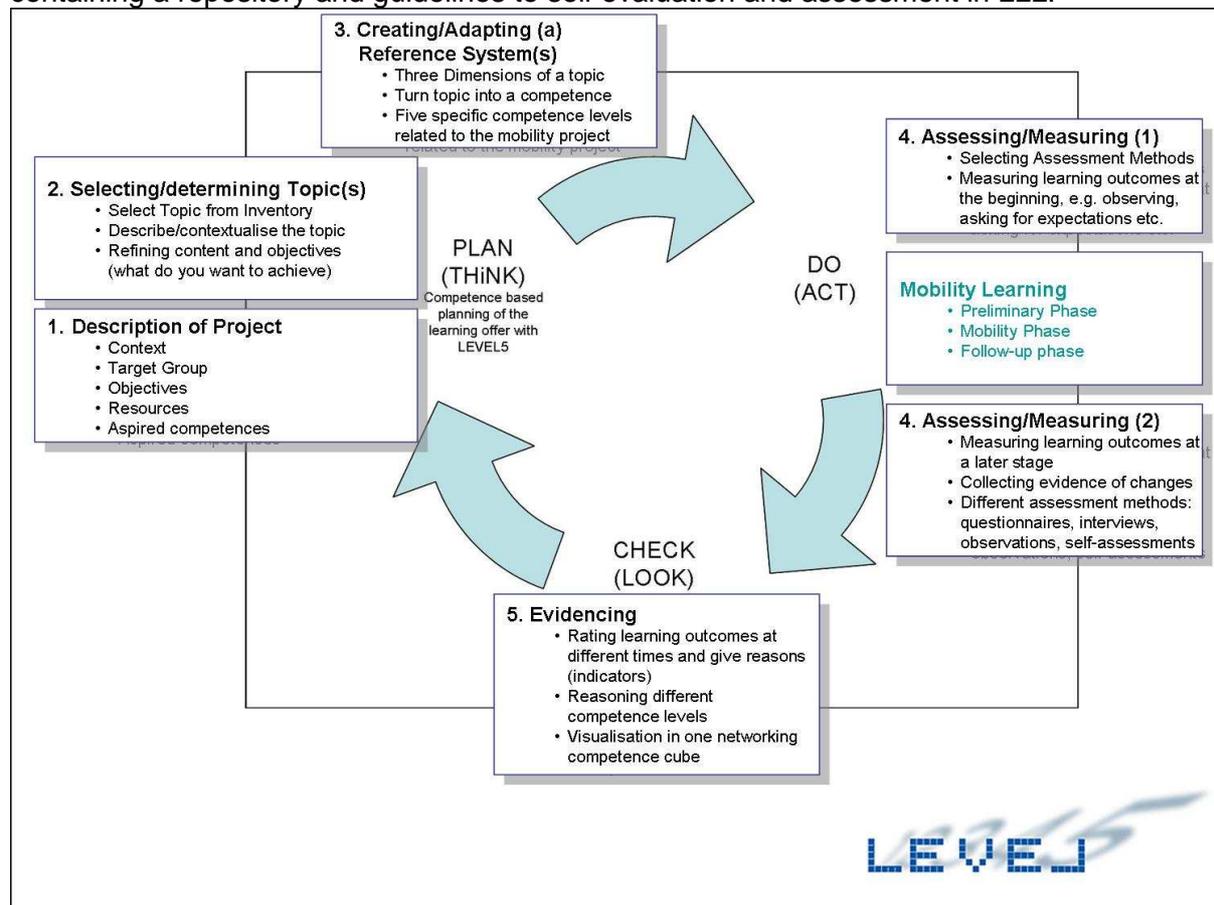


Fig. 4: LEVEL5 planning and validation steps integrated in the TAL circle

Partly overlapping with this “ACT” phase the evidencing, rating part follows in step “Look/Check”. Here the results will be visualised and shown.

### 2.3 Integrating LEVEL5 competence based learning approach in a mobility case

Figure 5 shows how the 5-step procedure of LEVEL5 is implemented in the simplified Think-Act- Look- cycle.

The planning of the learning was described above and the learning parts are outlined in blue colour in the figure below.

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.sealll.eu/docs/manual/Sealll01\\_UK\\_web.pdf](http://www.sealll.eu/docs/manual/Sealll01_UK_web.pdf)

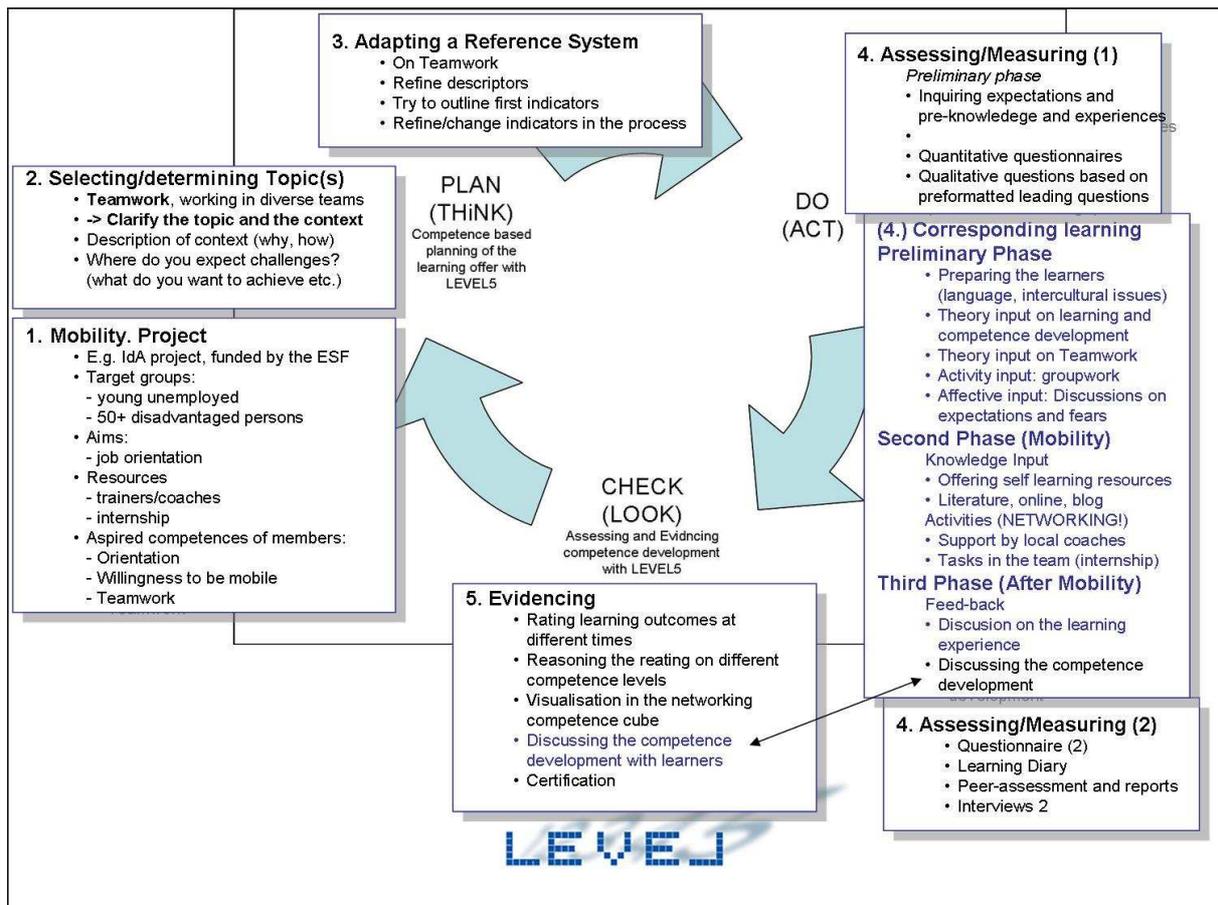


Fig. 5: LEVEL5 applied as planning and validation tool in an informal mobility learning action

### Think:

LEVEL5 steps 1-2 (project description and topic selection are representing the “Think” phase.

Steps 1 and 2:

Important learning project issues (such as purpose time, resources, context, available materials etc.) are reflected and described here.

A fitting description of a competence that will be acquired during the informal learning phase is described.

In the given case this topic is “Teamwork”. The topic and the context is teamwork in a diverse and multicultural team in an internship, here from young people from Germany in a vocational internship on Teneriffe.

Step 3: By reflecting on the 3 dimensions of the teamwork competence (knowledge, skills and attitudes) we are already in a profound planning process.

The output of this step is a revised (or simply accepted) reference system for the teamwork competence that should fit to the context of the specific internship situation.

### “ACT”

The “ACT” stage of the action circle displays on the one hand on the learning (in blue).

It consists of a 3-stage approach including a pre-phase (preparing the mobility learner in theory and practice and also touching the affective dimension. This can be done by knowledge input (on teamwork), simulated actions (group work) and discussions on expectations and fears of the learners before going abroad.



In the mobility action itself (phase 2) the learners will do their internship and live in the foreign country. All the experiences gained here contribute to learning.

There may be coaches who support the learning (in a more formalised setting) or the learners may live together with other team mates in a flat and gather knowledge, skills and change their attitudes in leisure time. The 3<sup>rd</sup> phase (follow-up) in our example consists of a 5 days conclusive workshop in which the experiences are gathered, the learning outcomes are discussed and conclusions (e.g. concrete follow-up activities) can be prepared.

In the

How is the LEVEL5 step 4 “assessment” integrated in here? (indicated in black)

The initial assessment should take place during the first workshop to get an idea of the levels of knowledge, skills and attitudes of each learner at the beginning.

As proposed in the figure above, suitable assessment methods are questionnaires (e.g. for knowledge related questions or experiences, self assessment games (like positioning oneself on a line (with 5 stages), interviews etc. The assessment methods can easily be built in the training, as well.

Also during the practical phase, certain assessments are possible, e.g. during observations or learning diaries in which the learners note their experiences etc.

The assessment of stage 2 (at the end) will be carried out during the follow-up workshop. Here a 2<sup>nd</sup> questionnaire could be delivered, interviews could be carried out or group interviews could be observed. Maybe also a tandem assessment would be possible.

### “Check”

Overlapping with the “ACT” phase the evidencing, rating part follows in step “Look/Check”. Here the results will be visualised and shown.

There are several possibilities to do that, dependent from the assessment method. The REVEAL group members made good experience in a discussion of the ratings with the learners. For instance one could talk about the self-ratings (or peer ratings) of the learners, discuss the reasons and blend these outcomes with the own observations (or with the observations from the coaches in the partner country).

However, what is important that there is a sound short description of the learning outcome before and after the learning experience, e.g.:

- He knew that teamwork is important in many professional contexts or at the end he had an overview of relevant teamwork methods to improve the performance of her team (L5)
- She worked in a team when instructed to do so (L2, activity); She actively looked for new teamwork techniques to
- He perceived network as a relevant theme but did not relate it to himself. After the mobility action he had a positive attitude towards “teamwork” (L3)

## 2.4 Impact

From the extensive use of LEVEL5 it has become apparent that a multitude of benefits can be gained from this process. It is not merely a documentation exercise but rather a dual process that benefits both the learner (on mobility) and the learning provider(s) (in this case trainers, instructors, counsellors, NGO etc.).

- Firstly, the learners’ skill and competency levels can be accurately defined and measured before and after a learning experience. The impact of the learning becomes clearly evident through the evaluation of specific parameters which enable the individual’s progress to be charted and monitored, thus enabling the learner to recognise the learning outcomes at a cognitive, active and affective level.



- Secondly, the educational and mobility staff members can monitor the effectiveness of the learning activity through highlighting specific areas for development or improvement and thus maximising the impact of their work.