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Adults Learning & Participating in Education

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A Higher Education Project

Alpine Project Dissemination Seminar,
Craiova, Romania, Maj 2004

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Lund University, Sweden

Community Outreach?

- **University (or HEI) is doing something...**
  - outside it's traditional geographical working area
  - for people who are not traditional students
  - with organisations which are not usually it's partners
  - something ... ionally considered

Breaking traditions...

- **”outside it’s traditional geographical working area”**
  - extra mural units; local study groups
- **”for people who are not traditional students”**
  - adults, older people, university graduates, Alumni
- **”with organisations which are not usually it’s partners”**
  - Enterprises; SME’s; Workers’ Educational Associations
- **”something which is not traditionally considered as it’s task”**
  - Action research; community & regional

Community outreach - basic definitions

- **CO offers a University the opportunity to provide services and activities to community members who are not the organization's usual (traditional) audience**
- **Active:**
  - establishment of regional units, Distance education..
- **Passive:**
  - development of expertice and economical growth..

Means (examples)

- **Establish single entry-points or front-door mechanisms**
  - External Liaisons Offices, Research and Development Offices, Regional Offices, City Offices
- **Create local support units for Open university students**
- **Organise regional development projects and programmes**

Key players

- **”Organizations and/or individuals who interact or have the potential to interact with a university”**
  - public/private schools and other training institutions + supervising institutions
  - business and industrial community
  - support organizations (chambers of commerce, trade unions,…)
  - local and regional governments
  - educational users (full & part-time students)

ICT?

- Information technology (IT) **is the term used to describe the items of equipment (hardware) and computer programs (software) that allow us to access, retrieve, store, organise, manipulate, and present information by electronic means**
- Communication technology (CT**) is the term used to describe telecommunications equipment through which information can be sought and accessed, for example, phones, faxes, modems, and computers'**

http://education.massey.ac.nz/lt/NETerm.asp

Computer Mediated Communication (CMC)
(Mason, R. 1990. Computer conferencing in distance education. In A.W. Bates (Ed.), Media and technology in European distance education. Milton Keynes: The Open University)

- **Computer-mediated communication (CMC) is the set of possibilities which exist when computers and telecommunications networks are used as tools in the communications process: to compose, store, deliver and process communication. Such systems rely on a basic configuration of a main-frame computer with appropriate software, connected via telephone and data networks to users with terminals or micro-computers.**
  - electronic mail, which allows messages to be sent to electronic letter-boxes for named individuals, which can be accessed when the named user logs on;
  - computer-conferencing, which allows messaging to be shared 'openly' by all 'members' of a conference;
  - (Chat, synchronous online messaging; added by JM)

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Information and communication technologies (ICT) in Higher Education:

- **Telephone, video, audiocassette, television, radio**
- **Videoconferencing, audioconferencing, audiographics**
- **Computer based learning programmes, CD-Rom**
- **Internet-based communication tools (chat, e-mail, computer conferencing, groupware)**
- **WWW-based resources, interactive materials**
- **(WWW-based) learning platforms (WebCT, First Class, FLE, Luvit, Studium, etc.)**
- ***Virtual training organisation* (eg. Virtual Open University; include course- and student management services and tools)**

integrated to face-to-face learning

Overheads in web
additional material
links to Internet-res.

email
chat
discussion forums

Text
pictures
sound

Human commu-
cation & inter-
action

Web-based course

Self-study materials
Interactive tests
hypertext & multimedia

conferencing systems
discussion forums
chat, email

Web-based only

The Swedish Netuniversity

35 universities

2500 courses (70 degree programs)

145 000 applicants

70 000 study places

Annual budget of about 30-35 million SEK (3-3.5million Euro).

Global

Turnover 1 miljard SEK

www.netuniversity,se

The Swedish Netuniversity

- **The Swedish Net University Agency will work within three principal areas:**

  Information and marketing of courses via a web gateway

  Development of IT-supported distance education within important areas

  Development of knowledge and exchange of experiences

  The Agency will also administer and coordinate activities within the Swedish Net University.

The Swedish Netuniversity

Strong brand name

A co-ordinating agency

Stimulate improvements

The Swedish Netuniversity

The Swedish Net University

The Swedish Net University mainly aims at widening the distance education market in Sweden.

The Swedish government recently decided to set up the Swedish Net University as a dual or multi-modal university based upon the courses and education already given by the Swedish universities and university colleges. As an initial incentive, these institutes of higher education will be given an extra disbursement (totally 100 million SEK for year 2004) from the government, for courses given within the Swedish Net University. The disbursement was 211 million SEK, in 2002, and 160 million SEK last year. Participation within the Net University is voluntary for the universities and university colleges.

Strong brand name

However, most universities will participate, and offer a wider range of courses than those supported by the extra stimulation resources. The Swedish Net University is planned to be a strong brand name for Swedish distance education provided by Swedish universities.

A co-ordinating agency

In order to run the project, the Swedish Net University Agency (located in Härnösand in the geographical middle of Sweden) has been started. The primary task for the agency is to co-ordinate the different courses and education given by the various Swedish universities. The agency has an annual budget of about 30-35 million SEK.

Stimulate improvements

Most of this funding will be used for different purposes such as stimulating improvements in skills and competence among distance education teachers and other personnel. It will also be used to identify topics and areas that would benefit from more distance education. Furthermore the agency runs and develops this web-based platform where the Swedish Net University and its courses are presented.

The Swedish Netuniversity

- Search with free text
- Subjects
- Start ? flexibel vår 2004 sommar 2004 höst 2004 vår 2005
- Tempo ? Individual,parttime etc Deltid
- Level
- HEI
- In case of physical meetings (where and when)
- Language[?]

Good example EGIS

- http://www.e-qis.org

EGIS Luvit

- http://egis.luvit.se/Luvit/entrance/entrance.asp?cid=3

Other innovations using ICT & CO

- **LUVIT, Lund University**
  - Web-based courses for Continuing education (Öresund region, world-wide, China, BSVC)
- **Open University, Åbo Akademi University, Turku**
  - web-based courses for minority population
- **Tarto University**
  - ICT support for Open University students during their independent study time via e-mail lists and WebCT
- **University of Helsinki, Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education**
  - regional offices (9) & regional development policy

KEY messages ICT-Community Outreach

From a lifelong learning perspective ICT and Community Outreach are among the most effective and efficient ways of reaching adults and widening their participation in HE.

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KEY messages ICT-Community Outreach

ICT is a tooll for lifelong learning. Delievering courses through the net brings benefits for adults in addition to the stated aims of the course, e.g. to help students become familiar with the eWorld. Although ICT-based teaching is time-consuming and expensive from an investment point of view, it helps to bring adult learners to universities.

KEY messages ICT-Community Outreach

Research into and experience of ICT-based teaching in universities shows that it is an especially suitable teaching method for adult learners, providing better access and qualitatively better learning results.

KEY messages ICT-Community Outreach

In delivering courses in the regions, co-operation with local training institutions can be mutually useful.

KEY messages ICT-Community Outreach

- Instead of offering 100% web-based learning, blended learning which offers the opportunity for face to face study and teaching sessions is preferred by many adult learners who are prepared to invest time in travelling to courses and linking up with their fellow students. Therefore combining Community outreach activities with ICT-based teaching seems to be a good option for adult learners.

KEY messages ICT-Community Outreach

When making a decision about offering ICT-based courses to adult students, it is necessary first to consider whether thay have the necessary IT skills

KEY messages ICT-Community Outreach

- Neither ICT nor CO strategies in isolation can help to overcome the negative attitudes, which prevent adult learners from wishing to participate in HE. Offering courses which take place outside the ‘ivory tower’ of the University may help to overcome adults’ perceived fear of the institution but, in addition student support measures such as introductory courses, good online support services and the provision of a strong IT and administrative infrastructure are essential for the successful implementation of an ICT /CO based programme for adult learners.

KEY messages ICT-Community Outreach

ICT and CO are particularly effective delivery methods in geographically isolated regions and for use with language minority populations who are living in a widely dispersed geographic area.

KEY messages ICT-Community Outreach

The 5th generation of eLearning focusing on What, Where and When; the intelligent Flexible Learning Model, characterized by flexibility in time, pace and space; materials; interactive delivery and approaching zero; all of these tools can be effective in breaking down the barriers to wider participation by adults in HE.

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Conclusions

Improving adult education provision in Europe
Common understanding/greater integration in Europe

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Conclusions –obstacles or possibilities

Language and culture

Level of development within individual countries

Appropriate funding to carry out the tasks

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Conclusions –the task for the future

To further develop new technology to enable teachers and adult learners to benefit more full from experiences across Europe

Alpine ICT and CO

Thank you very much for your attention

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http://www.qub.ac.uk/alpine/