

TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK IN OPEN FLEXIBLE LEARNING

A MANUAL

REREAL

REDISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BY
EVOKING
RICHNESS OF
EXPERIENCES OF
ADULT
LEARNERS

TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK IN OFL

**A Manual developed by the REREAL consortium
edited by Lernfeld Sprache / Gitta Stagl**

with contributions from partners in

Romania / Institute for Educational Sciences

Slovak Republic / National Centre of Distance Education

Poland / EDUSTIM

Poland / WUT, Faculty of Civil Engineering, Distance Education Study Centre

Finland / Rovala-Opisto

Sweden / The Swedish National Council of Adult Education

Austria / Lernfeld Sprache

Austria / Federal Department for Adult Education in the Burgenland

Austria / Research Society Burgenland

Austria / Verband Oberösterreichischer Volkshochschulen

Italy / Ufficio Educazione permanente, biblioteche e audiovisivi

England / Norfolk Adult Education Service

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Thanks and editor's note

Thanks to all those who have inspired our work by their work and who have been generous in stimulating us and have given us the courage to keep on following the goals set.

We have edited the manual and have stayed true to our conviction in editing: to remain as close as possible to author's work and intentions and language: The manual is in English, second language for all partners but one. We have polished the English. We have given or sometimes lent our voice and our overview as content managing body by using source material and reports and accounts supplied by partners. We have also summarized and given overviews where we have found it appropriate (editor's remark). We have inserted additional material where we have thought the reader would benefit from complementary information and get a better feeling for the context of work (ed.).

Gitta Stagl

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1. EDITORIAL

This book documents two years of project work. Our project work has consisted of two elements: Partners' practical work in the line of Open and Flexible Learning (OFL) and partners' intentions and plans in this direction. The project itself should bring together these two sides.

When we started with the idea for the REREAL project - Redistribution of Educational Opportunities by Evoking Richness of Experiences of Adult Learners - the partnership felt it was high time to develop a framework model for conditions in favour of OFL in all of Europe. Partners coming from eight countries in Europe wanted to clarify what the main issues and the main experiences in the field are and how they influence and relate to partners' work. It is exactly this process which the manual tries to show. With the manual we wish to disseminate our experiences and to share our choice of research findings and experiences with specialists in education and training of adult learners.

The second chapter describes in detail the development of our cooperation as a project group. We have looked upon the project making as part of a learning system: and we tried to convey to the reader how a heterogeneous group of twelve partners managed to turn into a cooperative system connected by the project aims. The mixture of differences in culture, background, field of work has turned out to be the greatest of resources in the project.

In the third chapter - In search of best practice - we show the way we approach theoretical aspects in OFL from two sides: we have approached from what is being discussed in research literature, we have approached from what plays an essential role in partners' practical assumptions. We have approached from what OFL can win by exchanging ideas.

Chapter four provides an impression of the different national learning landscapes. Chapter five is a collection of examples of good practice. The examples have been chosen by partners and demonstrate their focus of work.

Chapter six is a direct outcome of the work process. Language plays an essential role in any European project. We have tried to develop a common language. The glossary is a pastiche of partners' statements on term-usage.

Chapter seven is a collocation of profiles of partners. These profiles allow partners as well as readers to give and gain a short overview in condensed form. We are convinced that we have contributed with our project and with the manual to promoting OFL on a European scale and to clarifying issues and questions posed.

Gitta Stagl, project manageress
Lernfeld Sprache, Austria

2. SUMMARY OF PROJECT WORK

PROGRESS OF PROJECT AND OUTCOMES

1) Overall diagnosis and review of 2 years of project work 9/1998 - 8/2000

The project came into being when the yearly Socrates meeting took place in Alden Bisen in November 1997. The group of Austrians, delegates from their country, had prepared a telematic based project for implementation in Burgenland. In the course of reshaping this project for a different context and in preparation for a future transnational project the Austrian delegates came up with a couple of ideas and one or the other project outline. The meeting was well prepared by the Flemish Socrates agency and provided a lot of information on general and specific aspects of project proposals and management within the Adult Education action. Each partner got a folio with a file of sheets. Each delegate was described and characterised in terms of focus of work, field of interest and project intentions. So, out of this one could really pick partners who seemed to be suitable for a common enterprise. Much of the rest of the meeting in Alden Bisen was dedicated to discussing, shaping and reshaping the outline of a project to be. This project nucleus was then presented in front of the plenum of delegates as many other delegates tried to present theirs. The partners of REREAL who were midwives to the project were Sweden, UK (North Anglia), Italy, Romania, Poland and Austria. The partners felt they were not only following a mutual goal, they also felt the mixture of experience, know-how and directions from Europe was well united. They had had the opportunity to formulate together what they thought counted above all and after the meeting it was clear that Lernfeld Sprache (Austria) would work out a proposal and see to another meeting before handing in the proposal for approval. Thanks to the generous and professional support of the Austrian Socrates Agency and the then representative for Adult Education the project found the opportunity to come together for a second time and discuss alongside a handed out proposal draft.

Station 1
Alden Bisen,
Belgium
Nov 97
S, UK, I,
P, R, A (4)

REREAL
Project Draft

The proposal worked out by then was only partly appreciated and adopted, partly turned down out of two and 1/2 reasons mainly: too technical and too high flying and incompatible with resources given in the partnership. At the meeting two new partners had shown interest and had joined in: Slovakia and another Italian partner from Middle Italy. Another partner from Finland had demonstrated interest to join but had not found the opportunity to actually come. At the Vienna meeting partners were asked to calculate their own costs and expenses - after having been shown by the coordinating team, mainly Förderungsstelle Burgenland, how to allocate them to the various posts of expenses and headings. From the moment money came in, a kind of

Station 2
Vienna
1/98
S, UK, I (2),
P, A (4), SR

Project Proposal

awkwardness took hold, since partners became aware (for the first time in real confrontation) of the steep gradient between the different countries and representatives. The financial part of the proposal was as much a collaborative effort as the content side and we tried from the beginning to regard it as an integral and crucial part of planning and work. Partners estimated what they would be able to bring in in cash and kind and how much work the contribution towards the project would require. Then the project tried to adapt this estimation of real costs to a budget dimension which seemed to be within reasonable limits.

After the Viennese meeting the Swedish representative arranged for a REREAL-Conference space within the Swedish Internet platform. The proposal was reworked and adapted according to the consortium discussion and sent out to all partners. Only after their consent was given the proposal was sent out to the commission.

After the proposal got approved there was nothing but enthusiasm and joy. The first backlash came when we were informed that the budget had been cut and the rate of funding had been lowered. This situation meant our first steps in the project were marked by us having to accommodate to the new conditions. Nevertheless we were full of verve and stamina.

Station 3

Warsaw 9/98

1/98

P (2), S (2), I (2),
UK, A (4), SR, FI

*"Re-bringing"
partners together*

The lady director of the Polish Socrates Agency who had formerly been representative from a distance teaching institution had already said in Vienna that Poland would be the first official partner (besides Austria) for inviting the whole project. Thanks to her generosity, kindness and care the Polish meeting could take place and was planned to give us an opportunity to present ourselves to partners and to get to know more about the education reform under way in Poland. Unfortunately the lady representative from Italy (Tuscany) became seriously ill and the rest of the consortium became prey to an unfortunate bacterial infection. So out of "unforeseeable circumstances" the meeting was shortened. Nevertheless, the Warsaw meeting allowed us to become witnesses to the various ongoing measures of differentiation, professionalisation and modernisation of the whole sector of education and training. Each partner presented his/her organisation and tried to understand a bit more about the diversity of partners' background.

In Warsaw the consortium looked a bit different than before. (The Romanian representative was not able to come.) The Polish partner, in search of a substitute for herself and of another suitable partner, had chosen and found two gentleman representatives, one from Edustim, one from Warsaw Institute of Technology / Distance Education. They were present for the first time. The Finnish lady was present for the first time, the English partner wasn't able to come and so his co-partner in the project was there for the first time and on his own. The Swedish partner came with his co-partner. So: four people "quite" new to the project and to the "project feel", and the whole group on the brim of a "new start" and a real go.

The agenda was huge and had to take account of the fact that what might have seemed to be known was not known or unknown. The largest part of the work schedule of the meeting (diminished because of endemic sickness among the group) was dedicated to organisational matters. We had to clarify a couple of problems of co-operating (finances, organisation), there was the evidence of still strictly separated

conditions between the CEU countries and the PECO countries, in terms of money transfer, money sharing and funding, in terms of conditions of participation, in terms of working and travelling conditions. For instance: coming from the farthest northern part of Europe put high demands on travel costs and time and patience. Some institutions existing on very closely confined budget frames found themselves unable to travel without EU money at hand and on the bank. The money was then still due for some time to come. We were not entitled to concede travel expenses and subsistence for more than one person per partner but the amount of work involved (particularly the normal "amount of work" still due) made it difficult to manage the REREAL work without assistance. The organisational discussions swallowed most of the time at disposal, there was too little left for extensive discussion on project planning and timing in general (pre-prepared in written form by the project manageress), which was planned to take place in subgroups. The only thing discussed and agreed upon was the common base for talking (with slight amendments fully adopted). The Italian lady representative from Tuscany felt so unwell from the first day onwards that she could hardly take part at all. The Polish lady tried to show us the beauties of Warsaw and surroundings and pampered us with her hospitality.

The next institution prepared to shoulder the time intensive work of preparing for a coming together of all partners was the Italian representative from Alto Adige / Italy. There was once again a full agenda for work waiting, pressed into a rather short period of time; and on the other hand the wish from all partners present and the inviting partner: everybody wanted to see and feel a little bit what living and working in Bolzano was like.

The meeting was dominated by organisational prerequisites: there was the problem of budget reduction and consequently of budget raising on the national side, there was a whole set of questions to be settled beside the dominant "point" on the agenda: The agreement between partners and co-ordinator; there was the problem of shared and separate financing of "travels and expenses and subsistence" to be settled. The co-ordinator reacted to requests and developed a model which seemed to be acceptable for all partners (turned out to be a lot more difficult in practical transfer than thought). There was the problem of free lance respectively honorary work as part of adult education structure and the problem of how to make these real circumstances comply with "rules and regulations" set down. There was the problem of "shared" responsibilities. There was also the "platform problem" to be settled. The internet platform - thought as an instrument for internal communication and exchange and an opportunity for testing and trying out different forms of tutor/student interactions - was a little used instrument of the team and posed a lot of technical and non-technical difficulties to partners.

Bolzano was the first time the subgroups planned and set up worked as such. It was in this smaller forum that partners were asked to specify their own work and contribution and to give a time definition as well. Later on group results were presented to the plenum and so a picture of how the project would get going began to show. There was also a tour through a beautiful town preparing for Christmas and the opportunity to get to know and taste all the best in "Alto Adige's pantry" as well as getting to know Italian representatives from projects involved in REREAL work and having

Station 4
Bolzano
11/98
UK (2), S,
R, A (4), FI,
I, SR, P (2)

*Getting to know
background of
partners*

Station 5

Stockholm

3/99

UK (2), S (2),

P (2), A (3),

FI (1), I (2),

SR (1)

*Presentation of
three exemplary
Swedish projects*

them as partners in work development throughout our meeting. In the subgroup work a virulent problem within the groups surfaced: some partners were more keen on following an IT and IT delivery line of focus whereas others stressed that the main issue in Internet and IT usage was the criteria of openness and accessibility on one hand and of learner centred modes of delivery and embedding on the other hand. This field of misconceptions, misunderstandings and disagreements remained and remains on the hidden agenda on one level of project interaction while at the same time or for the time being it stays mute. The Bolzano meeting - with agreement settled, organisational problems tackled, work agenda of partners presented and subgroup work in action - dismissed the group with optimism and clarity grown to set about group work and own work.

The next institution inviting was the Swedish Folkbildningsrådet. We had the opportunity to stay in a very famous and long established in service institution in adult education with a working atmosphere made to fit. Located outside Stockholm it also provided the possibility to see the sea, a small local community and the typical surrounding of Swedish adult education and adult education centres. The Swedish partners created the opportunity for the REREAL team to get to know projects in the vein of open and IT learning through the enlightening presentation of three Swedish exemplary projects well worth the label: best practice. Each of them was amazing and most impressive in itself but as an outflow of the overall promoting atmosphere and investment in presenting independent and innovative initiatives and projects they were overwhelming: they demonstrated the scope of the idea of adult education in terms of inter- and extra-institutional co-operation, in terms of social impact and applied social research and learning, in terms of innovative IT and PC usage for innovative "teaching" and learning methods and the latter twos' potential to allow access to complex curriculum and learning matters for new and less lucky target groups (handicapped).

These presentations created not only an atmospheric background for our encounter as a group and the working atmosphere, they were at the same time encouragement and confirmation for the layout of the project and its orientation.

Partners got a feedback from the project manageress (on flip charts visible for all present) on their work handed in so far and put down what was still due to come. The group compared these individual achievements and those to come with the overall aim of work (visible for all) and found general correspondence.

Another discussion on platform problems turned out to be necessary, the Swedish colleagues once again explained the concept and structure of the platform. The group as such decided on a set of frequency of checking and on homework tasks: Frequency developed with the progress of the project, agreement for frequency did not work.

The structure of the manual was pre-suggested to the group as a result of focus of work already demonstrated through working together on the project. This pre-structure was adopted and amended and modified in detail. The first part of evaluation was done in subgroups. They discussed the self-reflective questions developed by an external evaluator (in co-operation with the co-ordinating team) and came to a very diffe-

rentiated picture of their work so far: Once again, not accidentally in the subgroup on IT and open learning, the clash between cultures and traditions became visible: technical versus non technical, more or less outspoken, the question of efficient versus claimed inefficient ways of working. Once again the rupture came out into the open but was neither deepened nor picked up and talked out in the open.

At the end of this meeting the 2nd part of evaluation was executed in pairs: These operative questions mirrored the different states of identification, confusion and awareness of this state not only in the actual answers but also in the way the questions were used to consider and re-consider problems and difficulties encountered and to regard them as part of one's own responsibility. The general tenor of operative questions could be summarised in short: the difficulty of getting a grasp at the connection between one's own way of thinking and the project's more comprehensive goal; the different interpretations and meanings for "keywords" of the project; the language problem (English being the common working language) and the largeness of project group.

The meeting ended on a sense of heightened clarity and on a determination to set out and do the work still due and to bring in everything promised and planned as well as to make better, broader and "project relevant" use of the platform.

This time the invitation for the group was shouldered by the English partner. The Norwich meeting was once again a very carefully prepared and laid out meeting. The English partner created the opportunity to visit and become familiar with the essential institution and site for adult education, a remarkable medieval heritage place where innovative and creative adult education work is being done. The English partner gave us the opportunity to see the "Learning Shop", an exemplary model for openness as well as the "living sign" for the impact of advice, guidance and information on an inter-institutional and low threshold level.

Station 6

Norwich

7/99

UK (2), S (2), R
(2), P (2), A (3), I
(2), FI, SR

*Demonstration of
open learning
environment*

We were housed in a cosy place with a proper functions room for work and we dined well and felt most welcome and perfectly looked after. The work agenda once again was quite rich and especially packed as the project was approaching its first close of year one with the subsequent necessity of reviewing, assessing and presenting outcomes and developments.

There was a dense file on the overall feedback and diagnosis from the side of project management. There was a sort of drafted and abbreviated version of this final report: to draw the group into the prospect of finalising and sharing responsibility for things achieved and things not achieved.

There was also a questionnaire for each partner on his or her special features of work in the context of the overall project aims. There were also papers on a diversity of definitions for key words. Bad luck in the form of technical breakdown of aeroplane caused a severe delay of arrival of project manageress and this led to the necessity to improvise. The group work was moderated by the English partner. The group worked on "listing" relevant key words in the project with the perspective of creating thus another building block for working together on a group level while at the same time

generating a "common" group specific and unique set of definitions (as a sort of glossary for the planned manual). The group decided to put this collection of key words on the platform and use it as a means of working in progress and interaction.

A good deal of time was taken by external evaluation part III, a direct work form between group and evaluator (without co-ordinating team). Part of evaluation was afterwards made part of transfer between evaluation and "ongoing project work"; a debated issue was the problem of sharing responsibility on the group level. The group made it clear that exchange of information and experience should be as symmetrical as possible: The problem how to process the richness of resources in the group in a shared but nevertheless clearly "labour division based" form remained untackled. Once again there was the good will and every good intention to become more initiatory and responsible for the group process.

Since little time was left, there was not enough space to discuss documents presented by project manageress in detail, but the latter were transferred to the platform (as always and as planned) for everybody there to see and comment. It was agreed that the questionnaires would be filled in by partners and handed on via platform, for everybody to know and to learn, to exchange and to progress with work in the time-span left (till 9/2000). The group said farewell in the hope to come together on a more regular basis on the platform till the next meeting would take place: The project manageress was to write the final report and partners were to finalise their reports (either questionnaire or/and more). The co-ordinator wrote the financial part and the partners were to finalise bookkeeping along the very detailed and precisely prepared hand out of the co-ordinator until the end of August 99.

For the first time ever all partners were present and in spite of all problems and difficulties in understanding and becoming a joined venture, the group had developed a sort of project work identity. A project work identity is not necessarily the same as a mutual understanding of how to work, but at least an identity of co-operating as a group. This seemed to have been one of the most important outcomes and achievements, fragile though and sometimes dormant maybe, but existent.

Station 7

Rust
11/99
UK, S, R,
P(2), A (4),
FI, SR, I (2)

*Thorough planning
and structuring of
the manual*

The Rust meeting - named after a small village famous for its wine-growing and its wine culture and diversity - was a full success - both in terms of work intensity and in culinary terms as much as in hospitality. The two Burgenland partners saw to a place with seminar facilities well situated amidst the reed-girdle of the Neusiedlersee.

The meeting was dedicated to the thorough planning and structuring of the chapters and subchapters of the manual. It was here that the partners came forward with their particular intentions for the various divisions of work and felt they could contribute as partners. It was also here that the plan to do more in terms of dissemination and exploitation of the project outcomes came into being. The course of the project convinced the partners of the priority task of offering knowledge and discourse as well as experiences in core issues to official authorities on the middle level as well as to offer intensive workshops for trainers, tutors and educationalists active in the field. The continuing discussion on the impact of technology in such a project and in the REREAL project fuelled the discussion how to proceed - either in the direction of

new technological formats and forms of presentation or in the vein of integrating technology as part of an overall didactical and pedagogical approach for a broader scope on traditional learning ideas and forms.

The consortium took up the idea of the CT to continue into a third year, with two main ideas - seminars and workshops for the two above named target groups and dissemination through "re-languaging" the common product in English into the partners' mother tongues under the motto synergy through diversity. Partners went back home overloaded with a very tight work-schedule, the project manageress turned ideas into a follow-up proposal and the co-ordinator refined the rough calculation.

Partners were spoilt with good meals and drinks. They had the opportunity to see Eisenstadt and were invited to get to know the information and advice service offered by a regional network of institutions under the initiated and co-ordinated and scientifically monitored by the Förderungsstelle and they were also invited to the Verband Burgenländischer Volkshochschulen.

The second meeting in the second year was organised by the Finnish partner Pirjo Keinänen with the help of Tuula Salonen, a colleague and tutor at the Rovala-Opisto and active in the field of "A-info" (see chapter 5, Ageing workers in the Information Society). The consortium wanted to see the most northern partners in her real-life setting of work to understand better what it meant to work in an AE institution inspired by methodist thinking and settlement work around the Polar Region. The consortium was staying in a lovely Finnish kind of lake resort with seminar facilities. Lapland with sunshine and fully covered with snow welcomed the REREAL partners with around zero degrees and an introduction to science and culture in Lapland (Arktikum) through the history as well as with the culture of sauna and rich meals for cold conditions.

The work schedule was immense - partners were asked to give answers to a huge lot of requests, detailed and worked out by the project manageress on behalf of the CT. Partners also had the opportunity to get to know a fairly new branch of the University of Lapland, the Continuing Education Center. Riitta-Liisa Heikkinen-Moilanen presented a form of continuing education in the vein of extended co-operation with firms who wish to renew their concept of work as well as to coach newly established enterprises on their way to good commercial success. The meeting was regarded as a full success. The environment of a lake resort and the secludedness of the setting created a particular atmosphere for coming together and communicating. Partners felt well cared for and at ease and the setting prepared good meeting grounds for work and for interpersonal and group encounters (reindeer-sleighting).

Station 9Vienna 26th - 29th August 2000The third meeting in year 2 is to take place in Vienna, in August 26th - 29th. This meeting will be celebrating the publication of the manual (paper, CD-format) and will prepare the 3rd year of work.

Station 8
Loma/Vietonen
Rovaniemi
4/00
UK, S, R, P (2),
A (4), I (2),
FI (2), SR

*Partners' work
in detail for
the manual*

Station 9
Vienna 8/00

2) The formation of consortium and group cohesion: To every what there is a how

The start of the project was above all marked by strong convictions and the wish to explore the pedagogical dimension of openness in learning: primarily in the sense of understanding, fostering and facilitating access without preconditions and whens and ifs for learners unused to or/and disappointed by traditional ways of schooling and traditional teaching methods.

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Then there was another aspect to openness which made the initiating group eager to launch a project: the aspect of learner-centredness - this aspect did not only have a social aspect - in the sense of second chance education and overcoming disadvantages and imbalances - but above all a methodological and conceptual aspect: learning was to be designed as a many faceted process with a variety of connecting links from the learner's side, from the kind and delivery of resources and from moderators, facilitators, instructors as tutoring and promoting staff - and last but not least from a different kind of institutional background (less a place than an organisational background and networking connection and provision).

"Normal" work so far hadn't allowed for this kind of reflecting and thinking and things had been torn between the feasible and what could, should, might be done and be possible.

This was a common aim, but the aim itself was differently triggered off: whereas Sweden was already prepared to meet the challenge of developing new and flexible forms of provisions, Austria was trying to root its steps in this direction and underpin the advantages and chances of a rich variety of offers in this direction. England was not only well advanced in open learning models, partnerships and practice, but strongly struggling to attain the necessities in resources, time, space and opportunities and to accommodate to the boost in demand with means and organisational and economical framework conditions that were not really fit to meet the demand. The Romanian partner was interested and engaged in developing new concepts of education, training and teaching and learning on a grand scale, while at the same time struggling with severe economical hardship and the overall difficulty to make ends meet. The Italian partner was interested in finding out more about how to accompany and how to make use of innovative means in the broad sense of the term - new technologies and new forms of teaching and learning. The Polish partner was trying to develop the offers of distance teaching and learning facilities (only given as a nucleus and a large field of interest) amidst an educational landscape "on the move" and where "structures" for implementation were still amiss.

Even in the initiating group some had very clear ideas, others liked the concept and were curious how the vague would become more palpable, soon. None of us really knew much about our conditions of work and how much capacity each of us would actually be able to set aside. It was a project in the making and a strong notion what could be possible if only it would be made possible.

The strong initiating inclination present in the core group was on a superficial level a homogenising factor. This factor was absent when the group got larger. There was the interested partner from Slovakia, co-ordinator of a hub of distance centres booming in the young republic and strongly interested in fostering international connections to maintain high standards in provisions and technical levels for offers for higher professionals. The Slovakian partner stepped in and had less extensive involvement in the process of making.

There was the Finnish partner coming from a remote part in Finland (see chapter 5) representative of a highly acclaimed and long established tradition of "Folk High School teaching and learning", very much involved in creating more community and socially relevant educational provisions for second chance education in a variety of forms and bringing "margin target groups" into the centre of education and attention.

The Finnish partner joined the project on behalf of the written documents. None of the institutions involved had a "real" feel for the dimension, let alone background and preconditions of Finnish partner's field of work.

The two Polish partners were both deeply anchored in the field of student development and technical studies on the tertiary sector. In an educational landscape with a high factor of mobility and change and a strong inclination towards highly skilled professional studies and a strong shift towards distance learning modes they found themselves pressed for offers, provisions and high standard delivery. The newly implemented and well working concept and practice of continuing education and the forming of partnership ventures for new training opportunities with high standards created a great interest in obtaining appropriate know-how for meeting demands. Both partners became partners of a consortium where none of the other partners had a comparable background and comparable field of work. Let alone non homogeneity, little was known of "how" partners "fared" in their field of work.

So, once again, on a once again different level, there was a strong want for heading for a broader aim. But there was the difficulty of making do with a high degree of non homogeneity in understanding and interpreting the "broader" aim. This in itself turned out to be a difficult business. And on the other hand there was the problem of the highly demanding and "restricting" necessities of one's own field of work and the difficulty to connect with background and practice of partners.

There were opportunities to get to know what other partners were doing, there was opportunity to get a feeling of where partners were/are "specialist experts", but in comparison to the systemic necessities of own scope of work CONNECTIONS among partners seemed loose and aloof. There was too little time for becoming familiar with "hinges" in the partnership beyond the pressure of pressing agenda and timing work. We had to cope with a sort of double-bind. Where the outlined aim became clearer the background of partners became backgrounded. Where partners' work became more palpable, "partners'" connection to group work only became evident in the afterthought (and there was too little time for much afterthought).

Summarising one can say that the normal "sphere" of partner's work created no close "natural" affinity within the group and so the group had to draw on and cling to the "stronghold" of "common ideas and goals" to generate the homogeneity necessary for working together.

The four group meetings in the first year of work were all in all successive steps on the way to form a group. Each meeting had a huge agenda and in-between the hidden and nevertheless indispensable agenda of making the REREAL group a group.

The efforts and pains taken by each organising partner to create a cosy, relaxed atmosphere for working and staying has been a great motor towards group formation.

There was also another problem which could not be tackled: the continuity of representatives for all meetings. Except for the final meeting where the Romanian partners could all attend there was either a representative or a partner absent.

This situation worked as a cumulative disadvantage in the longer run. The continuity of persons, so essential for a group in formation in general, is a set-back for a group in the making, particularly for a group with such a huge work agenda and so little time at disposal. The missing continuity worked as a weakening factor for cohesion and reinforced the tendency towards wandering "circulation" of responsibilities (and thus the tendency towards "recycling" beginnings).

The four meetings were too short to allow enough time for intensifying "group building activities" like workshop and seminaristic forms of "bringing" in experiences in an easy going way. The agenda was dense and packed with "goals" and "goal orientedness". On the other hand the history of coming together has already had its repercussions in a slow advancement of group cohesion.

3) Transnational dimension

The whole is more than the sum of its parts

In any other than the 'group sense' there is a lot of cohesion in the consortium in the sense of resources and potential.

The consortium unites partners from eight countries in Europe, countries which by themselves have gone through distinct and marked separate developments in the course of history and in particular the history of the last century, above all after World War II.

Each of the countries involved has an education system that is impregnated by a specific historical process and the contemporary efforts to shape and reshape structures and sectors in order to be able to meet the challenges posed to educational and employment policies. Both, distinct historic features and particularities as well as intentions to reform and innovate, have to be regarded as cohesive factors for transnationality.

There is the long tradition of "community close" learning and learning as a democratic value and commodity for the self-confident individual in the Northern countries, for once, if allowed, to name Sweden and Finland in one breath. A tradition which shows in already implemented tracks for independent studying and small "learning" and study enterprises and the high level of awareness for education as a crucial factor in a country's and the individuals' wellbeing.

There is the Swedish partner, coming from a central branch in Swedish adult education and firmly based in the Folk High School tradition with its proud history of autonomy and "grass rootedness". And there is the second Swedish partner whose coordinating work mainly deals with laying bare the pedagogical concept behind a comprehensive distance education model, with the openness and flexibility for access and range of motion always in mind.

The Finnish partner is at the heart and at once at the forefront of a mode of teaching which brings education to the people and at the same time allowing them to share new developments rather than be swept aside by sudden and earthquake-like changes.

There is the English partner, representing to a certain extent the West of Europe and a country with a political and educational policy of its own. The concept of open learning comes from a country that has been trying for the last 35 years to make high class education come together with opening access and allowing target groups new and/or not well served in education to take part in education and realise the individual's potential through this participation.

The two delegates from a remote and economically little advanced area in England stand for outstanding efforts in their country: providing education with "user friendly" and "democratic" technologies and seeing that the content side and the quality of guidance and tuition is cared for. These partners are of essential value since their work reaches out - among others with the means to new technologies - to reach people who were anything but clients/users in education. So, the English partner is practically doing what one of the main issues in open learning is about: how to deal with and develop means and methods for learner centredness with outgrown and experienced adult learners.

There is the Polish partner from the Warsaw Institute for Polytechnics, an integral part of the famous Warsaw University for Technical Studies, and thus a representative for the then and now very impressive and highly praised field of professional engineering. The engineering studies aim at bringing quickly changing knowledge on the pioneering sector of technics and technology into their curriculum and daily work. They are also known for their comprehensive and versatile understanding of the term and function of technology and technicians within the overall social and practical structures. This partner, as well as the other partner from Poland, is prepared to meet the explosive demand on one hand for distance education offers, in particular in the field of engineering education on various levels. The latter is also prepared to meet the quickly emerging continuous demand for all kinds of engineering updates and further (professional) education from various institutions, including private enterprises.

The second partner from Poland has initiated an Institute for Continuing Education, a sector so far non-existent in Poland, has already tailor-made practical concepts - from design, staff- and co-ordinator training, to material delivery and IT delivery and workshop offers for guiding and instructing - mainly in the field of updating technical knowledge, know-how, but also in accompanying fields e.g. language or security measures. The Polish partners do not only stand for a crucial aspect in educational reform in Poland, they also explore intensively (in a situation of high demand from students and various other sectors) the challenges posed to distance and continuing education and under conditions where technical equipment is a minor detail.

The Italian partner from South Tyrol represents a region in Italy where the Italian speaking population are themselves a minority whereas the German speaking population is the majority. There is also a distinct and important other language and cultural tradition shaping the region, the Ladins and the Ladinic language. Through this diversity of languages and cultures in South Tyrol the question of how to tackle non-homogeneous target groups and a hetero-lingual background is always on the agenda. This is not only a general challenge in education, but an explicit question raised by the REREAL project. How are differences and diversities in background, experience and knowledge used to allow a diversity of accesses and how are they brought into the learning process as resources. But, besides all this, a central question in Europe is how people are to live, work and learn together who have been shaped and are and will be shaped by a variety of cultures, traditions, languages and religions. The educational landscape in South Tyrol is a vibrant and many-faceted one; co-operative ventures between different institutions are frequent, there are a lot of initiatives on the regional, local or national level which attempt to combine environmental and historical education and new technology usage. There is a great impetus from the still "affluent" economy to invest in education and training.

The Romanian partner is at the forefront not only of investigating the country's demand for continuing and professional education, but even more elementary, to find out which ways of curriculum design, tools, techniques and instruments are appropriate for training the trainers as well as for offering up-to-date and life/personality relevant ways of learning. The Research Institute is on a constant level involved in the evaluation of innovative practices and in formulating findings and surveys as part of recommendations for future legal/structural measures. The Romanian partner is particularly concerned with questions of methodology, above all with the implementation of complex as well as experience-related methods of teaching and learning in the pure sense of "open learning".

The Slovakian partner is a co-ordinator and governmental consultant for the booming sector of distance education. The distance education institute has implemented within a couple of years a wide-spanning institution with branch sections in various places spread all over the country, a place for co-operation, design of material and tutorial support with the use of the latest standards in delivery through technology. The Slovakian representative is mainly dealing with adult education as professional and vocational further education. The material services are interesting for professionals on a post-secondary, post-graduate level. They are also interesting for those who wish to update their knowledge. They are designed and delivered in co-operation with clients

and customers and other educational providers. This sector, the further education distance teaching sector, is not only in high demand and expanding, but also an economically growing sector.

The Austrian partners form a good showcase for the different amalgams and branches that are to be found in adult education. There is the Federal Department for Adult Education in Burgenland, an agency working on behalf and as a direct co-ordinator of the Austrian Ministry for Education and Culture in the region. This part of Austria has always been a border line region and a melting pot of different cultural traditions that have shaped the country: the Slavic, Hungarian and German. The province has been a margin region for the last 70 years and is strongly characterised by rurality, sparse population, remoteness and a want in infrastructure. The region itself consists of at least three strongly different parts with distinct and separate structures. The acceptance and level of education is low compared to other regions in the country. This is the outer setting for a strong urge for improving supply and provision, particularly in education. The representative is the head of the institution and responsible for liaising partnerships, set up of networks and is initiating and has initiated various initiatives to provide flexible, modular forms of adult continuing and further education with the focus on adult adequate and experience-led learning, on setting up a guidance and advice system in education (accompanied by a scientific survey) and a diversity of locally based high quality suppliers.

The Burgenland is also a region without university. In order to do away with this lack and in order to bring younger researchers from the Burgenland back to the Burgenland, the Research Society was founded. Working amidst a many layered educational landscape spanning professional and liberal adult education, 2nd chance education and a diversity of religiously and ideologically inspired organisations, the Burgenland Research Society is an initiator, co-ordinator and launcher of research projects (mainly dealing with Burgenland, minority and cross-cultural or borderline issues). The Burgenland Research Society co-operates with other institutions and researchers from different fields, mainly from the social sciences. It has only recently delivered a collaborative project for a multilingual broadcasting service for and with children. The representative from the Research Society is the co-ordinator of the REREAL project and the project can benefit in many ways from his background experience.

The VOÖV is one of the regional sections of one of the largest providers of adult education in Austria. The institution is proudly looking upon a long established and upheld tradition of liberal education and within this range also selected professional education. The institution praises itself upon the impact it lays on comprehensiveness holding the balance between offers corresponding to economic demand and social change and offers for personal growth and development. The section based in Linz, the capital of Upper Austria, is mother institution to a set of decentralised local branches. The institution is an experienced provider of second chance education and can already look back upon a sort of practice in "opened" learning forms. A particularly remarkable effort is the initiative to establish, to integrate and to promote a media self-access centre and to promote first steps in the direction of distance learning including staff development training.

Lernfeld Sprache is a combination of a research, resource and material development institute. Its work centres around issues of language and language learning in the broader context of knowledge acquisition and language based learning as such. It initiates, promotes and manages a couple of projects with national and transnational partners in related fields of research and education. It also publishes books and other material. Lernfeld Sprache has developed an adapted version of self-study models for learning English as a Foreign Language from the NEC and has developed a German text based language learning model leaning on NEC material. Lernfeld Sprache also delivers seminars and workshops on tutorial work, language learning in self-study, distance learning modes and text based language work. Lernfeld Sprache is also active in the field of accompanying evaluative measures. Lernfeld Sprache does the project management of REREAL and worked as the co-ordinating and responsible editor for the REREAL manual.

Summarising one can say there is a very pronounced social element presented in the European level with second chance education for senior citizens and active measures to bring learning opportunities to people. There is a strong element of pedagogical and methodological accuracy and learner-orientation, and a strong element of curriculum consciousness in terms of wider curriculum areas and community based learning. There is also a strong element of professional and continuing education and training on the whole and an element of technical know-how, knowledge and instrumental and pragmatic planning and designing. There is a variety of different target groups not only in all directions across Europe but also in terms of cultural and linguistic mixtures. High skilled users/learners are being addressed as well as those less successful and less involved.

On an overall level this works as an absolute asset of the scope of collaborative quality of the REREAL project. Securing this transnational dimension and making it apparent and visible has taken some time and pains and efforts.

4) The project process as a learning system

Section 1 Positive and negative factors for making the project work.
Project "culture" conceived and planted; project culture
grown (up)

As already developed the project gestation and anticipation characterised a very strong start.

Each of the partners initially involved had a very long history of dedication to the cause brought in or at least a strong curiosity towards the cause.

- There was the strong dedication towards a pedagogical concept and the conviction that IT and new technologies were of importance, alas as instrumental devices, but never as "the means".
- There was the generally held view that IT could be a powerful tool for broad-

ning access possibilities for those at the fringe of education and learning: with sometimes fragile and economically pressed status.

- There was the conviction that education and learning should have something to do with assisting the 75% (as one partner put it) who are not at the heart of educational excellence and not in the hub of the technological boost.
- There was the determination to show that IT and "flexible" learning, both potential "democratizers", could be used as bridging the needs of the two groups at the two most extreme ends: the highly professional and mobile one and the marginalised and "homebound" one.
- There was the shared view that IT could be an "evolutionary" means where recent social and economical development had aggravated problem areas: the rural without means of joining the market; the remote becoming even more remote; thus forming a vicious circle of exclusion from employment and learning.

Those with strong convictions in the project had already had a longer history of active practical and theoretical application of open and flexible learning. They expected a chance to reflect on their experiences and to try out aspects through the project, aspects that had led a "neglected" life so far since daily routine wouldn't allow for more thought and occupation.

Those with less strong convictions, but of the opinion that IT and open learning were inevitable and coming developments, thought that institutions and co-ordinators should be present and steering instead of letting things happen.

There were those active in the field of offering provisions in the line of distance learning, who wished to take part in a project with experienced partners and hoped to benefit from the practice already apparent and the practical diversity of experiences.

Pedagogy rated highest on the list of priorities.

So, very strong pictures and needs at the beginning made for a strong underpinning of project plans and outcomes and the energetic thrive that shone through. Little account was taken of the actual reality of partners and the actual asynchronism of development of partners.

There was also the wish to expand the impact and the European dimension of the project and therefore to attract partners from even more directions in Europe.

The first phase of project making had provided the chance to expound on motives and to get a grasp at differing conditions and focuses. This privilege was only a privilege for those present in the making, but unfortunately not for those who stepped in later.

Those who joined the project in a later phase of making were either driven by a strong interest in European projects and co-operation and/or interested in one or the other issues raised by the project. The absolute and relative weight of issues remained an unknown quality as long as they were only raised as such and put down on paper. The

actual distribution of issue weight went through shifts and changes but this did not turn out until later and took some time to manifest itself. It took some time till the project was able to "assimilate" the new dynamics in the group and the new forces at work and "reshuffling" the cards of issues.

The process of composing and growing of a project group is neither something arbitrary nor a factor to neglect or underestimate.

The next step for the founding group would have meant to break down ideas conceived and planned into manageable work packages in time, grounding all this in the background of "each" partner's work and work routine. The new group on the other hand was in need of being brought into the history of project hatching and planning.

The concrete partnership, let alone the concrete partnership for "transferring a project already conceived", played a supporting role at this stage..

Learning outcomes:

When forming a working partnership any factor of development not shared by the whole group will effect the group and its work. Different lines of development in group and project work have to be brought into the group as part of the learning culture and environment of the group work. The group working and learning together has to develop an awareness of its composition and the composing process.

Section 2 Securing the richness of project group diversity and potential

Knowing and registering the potential of resources in a group is not sufficient for creating new possibilities of more comprehensive coherence on the transnational level of European partnership: Resources have to be singled out, pushed into the limelight and brought back again in the "ensemble vision" of the group.

This is not an easy thing in a group that works together but only comes together a couple of times a year and for a very short time. Accounts of work going on and background of work often have the tendency to lose their effect through the way they are presented. There is also a difficulty with context (since rarely shared) as well as the difficulty when things can't be put into context. It turns out to be the best and the best way to present the richness of resources by allocating and attributing resources /to certain key issues in the project. In doing so, the contexts resources come from are better visible since they become part of a newly created context (the latter being the REREAL context).

The broad label adult education - interdisciplinary, inter-institutional quality

- The REREAL group brings together researchers, co-ordinators, teaching and training experts, material and course developers.
- The REREAL group brings together people with different functions and roles in their institutions and professional fields: some of them are in charge of smaller and larger sectors of organisation, content management and application. Others

are co-ordinating, guiding and evaluating projects. Others are at the forefront of inter-institutional co-operation and responsible for the whole range of negotiating educational work, resources and results with partners or clients.

- The REREAL group brings together professionals from the field of liberal and general adult education, from the field of professional and continuing education, from the field of university education.
- Researchers in the REREAL project come from the field of methodology and pedagogy (*Romania*), from the field of combining educating and researching as part of social scientific theoretical education (*A/BF*) and particularly with issues in learning and resource based work (*A/LS*).
- Although occupied with research work and dealing with neighbouring fields, working conditions are wide apart. *The Institutul de Stiinte ale Educatiei (Romania)* is a university based research unit where the department for evaluation is a very sought for partner in applied research with subsequent policy and legal effects. The institutul/department of evaluation is a prominent partner in transnational project work concentrating on professionalisation of teaching and training staff and well backed innovative professional education. The institutul's concept stands for the impact of comprehensive versus lexical concepts in education.
- The partner from *Rovaniemi, Rovala/Opisto (FI)* is an experienced researcher of her own field of work, coming from social issues with the explicit aim of making research work relevant for everyday life and feeding teaching experience back into social sciences. The partner is most skilled in describing diversity of wants and qualitative analysis of different target group needs.
- The *co-ordinating institution, A/BF*, is experienced in transferring research findings into dissemination and delivery models for a broader segment of population e.g. multilingual radio broadcasting, in executing evaluation with the help of external specialists and in dealing with various most relevant side effects of project management.
- *The Learning Orbit Language (A)* is researching the rich field of language and knowledge in learning and teaching terms as well as in presentation methods and forms. *Lernfeld Sprache* is also active in the field of research work and research management, primary analysis and assessment. This work has a general direction; it focuses on adults and language acquisition and on self-study modes.
- The REREAL group brings together people in charge of co-ordinating federal functions: *Alto Adige/Ufficio Educazione Permanente (I)* and *Burgenländische Förderungstelle (A)* in terms of implementing and co-ordinating relevant issues in the region together with subsequent staff training and allocation. Both partners are involved and have initiated scientific monitoring of work in their field (and are thus also affiliated with the research side).
- There are partners with co-ordinative functions in the field of conceptual and underpinning work for new initiatives and set-ups, responsible for developing new models of inter-institutional and team work organisation and co-operating with partners from the different sectors of public life (*SIDE/S*).
- There are partners who co-ordinate networks and select, see and liaise staff for the outsourced complementary elements of work while at the same time establishing and maintaining close links between a variety of institutions involved like *NCDE/Slovakia*.

- There are partners who are prominent in co-ordinating distance teaching models within the university, running a department with an expansive branch in distance education (*Warsaw University of Technology/Politechnika Warszawska/P*) and there are partners who make the concept of extra-mural highly professional education work in the broader context of large scale co-operation with enterprises (*EDUSTIM/P*).
- There is the co-ordinating side of the work of the representative of the well-known Folk High Schools environment: he is also the successful facilitator for making the concept work on the individual level under the name of *Folkbildningsrådet/Sweden* (see chapter 5).
- There is a co-ordinating side to the curriculum management work and to the curriculum responsibility for IT and business training. The English partners (*NAES/E*) are both (even though on different levels) responsible for curriculum and course design, tutor and staff co-ordination and allocation and training. They are engaged in various activities of inter-institutional co-operation in educational provisions. They are partners in a range of accrediting procedures and ready to apply measures of evaluation and standards on their own field of work.
- Most of the partners who are involved in researching and co-ordinating activities are also involved in some kind of teaching and training. They either lecture, hold workshops and seminars, provide advice, guidance, tuition in personal or virtual form; they are directly engaged in teaching and training learners from different fields: second chance, employees, trainers, professionals, students, post-graduates.
- There is the range of educational sectors and differing target groups. There is a range of differing teaching experiences present in the project.
- In many European countries with a longer or shorter history of democratic development the field of adult education is historically a by-product of risen awareness for the impact of an "educated people" on democratic progress. Adult education adds to this precious dimension in civic and democratic societies (in some countries this insight stems from the 17th century and has flourished ever since, others have arrived at the same conclusion much later).
- Traditionally adult education has developed alongside and outside the formal schooling sector and has been a consequence of very early modern ideas on the impact of "lifelong" learning and learning as a means of personal and civic development. Under one and the same heading adult education represents different developments: Adult education has flourished in the Northern European countries under the concept of popular education. This term has become discredited due to fascist manipulation and destruction in Middle Europe. Adult education has been a very mobile and independent and unruly factor in a very traditional educational landscape in Western Europe. It has been strongly affiliated with popular culture and change in Southern Europe. It has always had a strong polytechnic component in Eastern Europe.
- In due course common tools and different developments have led to very distinct and specific features country-wise as well as within countries.
- The popular education and Folk High School concept of Sweden and to some extent Finland is very insistent on independence from governing and govern-

mental influence and decision making. Here, learning is strongly seen as a/the principle of self-organisation of self-confident and self-aware people. Learning is a means for collective dialogues and discussions and not necessarily a means of "qualification" in the functional sense of the term.

- The concept of polytechnical education is obliged to the idea of bringing together hand and mind and techniques of practice and mind. Making use of many sides of technology and technics present in real life stands for a very down to earth practical and pragmatic concept of learning. Professional learning and studying seems to be the "model case" for best learning since it provides students and professionals with the conviction from the onset that their work will be of use and will be utilised.
- There is the strong democratic strive in English adult education insisting on everybody's right to gain access to the various cultural and scientific sides of human heritage, in particular for those who have been excluded from this participation due to a lack of leisure time, to low status and low mobility.
- There is the strong Austrian tradition of bringing together university and popular education and learning in numerous efforts to bring science into the adult education curriculum and classes and to win researchers, scientists, professors and instructors for teaching in adult education and for working with people from different walks of life.
- There is also the strong affiliation between adult education and continuing education and further education. Allowing for change, in individuals and on more general levels, includes the willingness to adapt to changing needs in short term and long term education provisions, in particular in the field of professional updating and upgrading.
- Where education systems tend to become too hermetic and self-sufficient the urge to make up for this with segmented, modular building blocks of clearly laid out specialisation rises. It is therefore not surprising that the pressure for change raises its head under the motto of more suitable types of professional training and continuing education offers spanning demands from people with little formal education to post-graduate professionals.
- There is also a strong and in some countries close connection between the adult education sector and the tertiary sector. The tertiary sector is interested in keeping high standards while at the same time getting rid of the secludedness of academia. The adult education sector has to fight against the systemic forces of devaluation, of arbitrariness and irrelevance in design and standards.
- All these different sides of adult education and of different agents in adult education are united in the project. One of the outcomes planned in the project is the description of the framework of prerequisites for open and flexible learning.
- All the partners assembled signify a specific framework. So they form a model how conditions of the countries in the consortium affect prospective developments.

Learning outcomes:

It is everything but "love's labour lost" to investigate closely the different contexts and cultural and historical contextual roots for the latter. This important task is work

intensive, demands archaeological digging and quite a time to show contours. The contexts and their implications for work ethos, work focus and definition of working terms only show when misunderstandings arrive. It takes time, thought and reflections to take these things as part of the context back into the group.

Section 3 Learning dimension of qualities and difficulties in the REREAL process

From the start onwards the project was determined to make use of two kinds of approaches: the explorative and the experiential approach. The collaborative making of the project, a mighty factor for pushing the project, turned out to be an ambiguous factor in the middle distance. Since consensus on "accessibility" and "learner centredness" seemed to be given, and these factors were also apparent and guiding principles of one's own work, there seemed to be no need for exploring these aspects further or bringing these aspects forward on the group and group learning level.

Another positive factor for the explorative approach was the fact that work for the project seemed to have a safe home base in "ordinary" and "daily" work. Working in the project was well linked to normal work and was to give a chance for exploration.

Where institutional work was less closely affiliated with the project aims and asked for close scrutiny of "what" and "how" to connect there was a sense of insecurity about what to concentrate on and how to allocate capacities to tasks.

Where partners had a strong aim of their own within the broader goals of the project they went ahead in any case and tried to follow their route of work and bring in their results as a form of doubled synergetic effect: heightening the effect of their actual work and bringing an actual practical dimension to the project as such.

The explorative approach, closely connected with the expectation that primary research on-site would provide a more dimensional picture of adult education and working background of partners, took some time to set in.

The explorative approach, closely connected with the goal set of forming a framework for exchange, for preconditions of set-ups and networking, took some time to develop form and to get going.

Where work at the "home base" included reflecting, evaluating and assessing processes and giving accounts and reports, it seemed to take less extra efforts to bring in components relevant for the overall project aims.

Where work at the "home base" was under the pressure of being done, bringing together "action" and "action research" posed new tasks. There was the problem that partners thought the actual work done is an equivalent for bringing in results in a mixture between work account and reflecting activity.

It actually requires an extra effort to make actual work part of the project: reflecting in the sense of reviewing, appreciating and reflecting in the sense of evaluating practice under a set of relevant criteria.

It took some time for partners till they got used to developing a technique for researching their own field of work and it took even longer for the group to develop a feeling and a way of presenting experiences, selected case studies and particular features. It also took some time till the project group learned how to address partners and project matters. Having decided on practising an experiential approach deepened some of the difficulties posed but helped to bring them out into the open, too.

The wide and colourful conditions of partners and the different functions partners have in their learning landscape stressed the dimension of learning environment. The project had the explicit aim to fathom out the relevance and the impact of environmental factors in learning.

These environmental factors, so one of the assumptions, could not be bluntly reduced to environmental factors for learners as social individuals and their immediate environment for learning and other activities, but should and would also apply to the environmental factors in the "learning" institutions. To characterise the pedagogical, organisational, economical and technical framework for open and flexible learning was one of the outcomes planned.

It took the project nearly a year to realise and to assimilate the powerful dimensions of the range of differences in the partnership and to develop some sort of understanding for these phenomena. The different worlds and qualities of experiences among partners slowed down the process of finding out cohesive areas and contiguity. But differences were brought to the surface and regarded as part of work and group environment.

Another factor worth being studied and hindered from sinking into oblivion by the practice of experiential approach is the language problem.

There are mainly two sides to the language problem in a group working together. One of them is rather closely connected to whether one communicates in one's mother tongue or in a second / foreign language.

The other is a genuine language problem as far as all language is a general expression of communication, culture and thought.

Our common language as a project group is English. English is the mother tongue for only two of the 16 delegates, all the others communicate in other languages.

There is the factor of differing levels of mastery or excellence in a foreign language and the factor of writing in a foreign language.

There is the factor that very few people are able to express themselves freely in a foreign language, freely in the sense of being able to express everything they wish to say and to be understood.

This leads to the general language problem: the languages we use enclose our differences in culture, history, tradition and so we have to develop an understanding for these differences in order to be able to make sense or to narrow down meaning of what is being communicated.

These difficulties resulted in another quality of distortion since most of partners could speak English and French, maybe Italian and German, whereas no one but the mother tongue partners could speak Swedish, Finnish, Polish, Romanian or Slovakian.

This situation narrows down the accessibility of background and thus understanding for relevant differences. On the other hand, differences once understood and sunk in, could create a better basis for working and learning as partners. To allow these differences to exist and co-exist and to have a go at finding common interests was and is an explicit aim of the REREAL enterprise.

Then there is the time factor of the project development and project progress. At first things seem to be completely in hand, there is more or less enthusiasm and the conviction that things will develop within a given time. First, there is so much effort in developing models to make the timing work and then, after a while the project gradually runs out of time.

As one is used to register in any intensive working process one always wonders where time has gone to. The project was neither naive nor unaware of the time component of work, but there was simply too little time to handle the different levels of project: goals, aims, partnership, individual partners' work. What could be observed on the overall level of the project could also be seen on the level of partners' work and their contributions. Even where all things planned and promised were brought in they were sometimes only a shadow of what had originally been planned.

In the long run when all these factors will have been reflected and re-reflected in partners' work the time factor will lose its impact and become a relative factor for the time being partners. Project development and outcomes do not work on the same level of pace.

Many of the pros and cons in the REREAL project can be expressed as learning dimensions. These learning factors can be found in any learning process, they are all the more of importance in any process involving elements of openness and flexibility.

When we come back to becoming an explorer in our own field of work, we have to be ready to meet the challenge of defining our field of exploration.

This task asks for efforts to observe things outside the familiar context: you step back, set a distance towards the familiar and normal and try to utilise the distance. Through the creation of distance one gets a different view and is able to define what one wishes to explore.

Only after the creation of this distance one is able to look upon him/herself as doing

research activities: the distance allows detailed description of standpoint, field of exploration and focusing on particular aspects.

The next step consists in searching for appropriate tools and methods of investigating, realising that any kind of assessment and critical reflection asks for means and measures for assessing.

This creation of distance is a productive must and an essential element in any, particularly in any self-governed or independent mode of learning and initiating learning.

In order to make this concept work, the learner has to disentangle him/herself from the usual work habits and has to become an observer of one's own work.

This distancing method has the advantage of neutralising vision and providing a clearer view of what is going on and how to "(re-)navigate" the boat. This is a dimension in learning and in particular in experiential learning which enables those deeply involved to make the most of their involvement while at the same time sparing them the "blindness of the expert".

Another powerful instrument for making distances to a means for better insight is using strangeness to know better about the familiar: One develops new, strange, unfamiliar "ways of seeing".

Another productive way of drawing on distances is the usage of tools of mediation: be they technical knowledge from specialist fields, be they practices of usage, IT networks or the mediation of writing. All these instruments of "mediation" are tools for accessing self, others and work field: They have the immediate effect of making one learn from one's own experience while sharing experiences with others.

Making use of distances in the way described above is the direct road towards the principle of resource based learning (which is by some authors regarded as the best and most comprehensive way of grasping open learning, see Derek Rowntree, Making Material-Based Learning Work, Kogan Page, London 1997).

Experiences, regarded (too) little so far, become resources through regarding them from a distance and through their discovery they give an extra dimension to the learning procedure. The distancing mode is a means to learn how to access things and to understand and take account of what one is doing (comprehension of procedure is the first step towards methodical awareness).

In order to make full use of resources the learner has to look upon himself as a resource. In the case of the REREAL project this means: the group has to look upon itself as a learning group and as a system of resources.

Then the often confusing variety of accesses, provisions, ways of thinking and working become incentives for enriching one's horizons. All this works as a step for developing new and less restricted ways of understanding learning issues as such and open and flexible learning in particular.

A learning group has the opportunity to use instructors as resources just like the fle-

xible learner can use his instructor, mentor, peer group as resource. The group has the additional advantage of having many instructors as resources. Where one might be an expert in a specific field of provision others might be regarded as complementary specialists.

Any learning process involves media and material. The REREAL group offers the chance to better understanding of ongoing processes" and dynamics through "participatory observation". While one is part(ner) in exchange, interaction, reflecting and describing, one can study own behaviour and action as well as others in (inter)action. The platform, the reporting system and the material transferred or transmitted are part of the process: they reflect the process, and they shape it.

Last but not least there is the potential of interaction as a resource. This interaction is not a passive product of project membership. It is an active taking part through discussing, finding out, questioning and asking and through answering. There is also the extended interaction offer of written interaction where distance allows freedom of space, time and pace.

Section 4 Relating resources to outcomes and outcomes to resources

Although the necessity to relate resources to activities and to outcomes has been acknowledged from the start and shown in careful preparation of overall budget planning as well as detailed planning from partners' side, including subsequent overhauling and checking back to clarify, this relation remained and remains a delicate matter.

There is the combined phenomenon of over- and underestimation of personal, financial and organisational resources. This double bind might be caused by too much work pressure on a short-time contract and short-time project basis. Everything must be done, but there is always too little time, too little money and not enough personnel to manage. All this sweeps like a giant wave over everything that becomes part of work.

Underestimation and overestimation take on the character of a chronic disease and become indistinguishable at last. On one hand there is the necessity to make do and to gain funding for the regular and/or the out of ordinary. There is a chance, the chance is taken, brings a huge load of work with it and suffocates the resources. Resource problems are not solved but reoccur on another level.

On the other hand there is the wish to develop and disseminate one's work and to make the latter more effective. There comes a lot of enthusiasm and verve with this purpose and that is where overestimation sets in, the process of resource distribution becomes a result of wishful thinking and is thus bound to fail.

There is and has been the will and wish to participate and join REREAL. There is the

dimension of additional funding, but this additional funding (as in our case) necessitated to bring in the security for a higher percentage of co-funding. Since budgets are being shuffled and re-shuffled, cut and severely reduced within short notice, resource planning becomes a "castle made of sand".

If institutions have to make do with the actually planned and the even reduced version of funding they are no longer in the position of managing resources. In most of the cases they have to make do with the resources given. Only institutions which are self-sufficient are really in the position to participate in projects solely out of pure interest. For them resources will not be of great impact. Others have too little range of motion with resources.

The development of the project has shown that resources really relevant for the project and for its development have to be available and disposable on a permanent basis: Resources from the "home base" have to get the opportunity to become fully familiar with the project and with the partners involved. The group is composed of individuals. All together they constitute the consortium and when one is missing the balance is distorted. This shows in many cases and in many forms: it shows in a want of exchange, in a lack of transfer, it shows in the recurring tendency towards starting anew and again. It disturbs continuity of work as well as the only eventually growing confidence between partners.

The development of consortium has shown that partners who have a lot to bring into the project must have an assisting partner to be able to share responsibilities and to practise a project-related system of division of labour: if one partner who has participated is not able to come next time this reduces cohesion and workflow.

The project budget allocation pins down the division of work load and responsibilities. Sweden and England have been regarded as the main contributors in terms of long standing background and experiences in the field of guidance, tuition and wider curriculum IT usage; Sweden above all as the agent for a soft approach towards IT usage as a means of encouraging independent and high quality form of education for adults. The division of labour shows in the part allocated to Lernfeld Sprache as responsible for project- and content-management. It shows in the provision for the coordinator who has to shoulder the whole part of organisational and financial stuff and instruct partners how to handle things in accordance with guidelines. The rest of the budget is a manifest imprint of partners' calculation, self-estimation and description of their work in terms of money and input.

When the relation between resources and outcomes is looked upon from the side of outcomes, one can say that the platform (brought in by Sweden) has served various purposes, but has not been fully used in the sense it was meant to: namely as a means of directed as well as free interaction between partners.

The platform has been used as an instrument for file saving (approx. 6 per input). The platform has been used as a means of contact (approx. 30 encounters). But the platform is still not used as a means of project-related discussion, as a means for directed responses, it is not used as a means of subgroup discussion, it is not used as a means for interaction on statements, requests, reminders.

Conclusion: Opening and reading work all right, writing and bringing in is a problem on the platform.

The framework concept for open and flexible learning has to some extent come into being, the elements are there, they have to be brought together and have to be shown in their interaction and contiguity (see chapter 3 A - 3 C).

Concluding one must say more investigations will have to be undertaken. Investigations will have to be more specific and focused and have become so in the year two of the project.

The project has already put forward a rough draft of manual, partners have formulated where and what they are going to contribute. The manual structure and discussion has had an important function for focusing group and project work.

A homepage has been designed. It exists on its own. It is not connected to links yet, but it will be in the weeks to come.

<http://www.folkbildning.net/~rereal.project>

Learning outcomes:

When the project team acknowledges the fact that much can be gained and learned by the positive and negative things encountered during work this will show in additional in-depth and experiential honesty and authenticity.

5) Overall summary of learning dimension

- The group making process is in itself a learning factor for a group working together. The whole group was not prepared to start a learning process when it set out to tackle its pre-set task. It was more seed and harvest than let grow and intervene when necessary.
- Crushed by the density of tasks set and by the range of scope asked for, the group as such had to take its time to assimilate tasks in digestible portions.
- The diversity of group factors manifested itself to the group in the form of differing understanding of terms and basic categories. These different understandings manifested while trying to grasp differing contexts and backgrounds.
- Each group member had to re-accommodate with his/her educational identity and to find his/her position within a common enterprise without losing (or maybe while developing for the first time) an outspoken individual position to the key issues of the project.
- The REREAL project set out to demonstrate the qualities of learning, firmly based in real life and relevant in real life: This is what came into being and showed in the developmental stages of the process:
- Real life factors, background, difference in culture, tradition, history will always play a crucial role in working together, let alone working together on a transnational process.
- The process of approaching with respect and attention is a European and democratic must: it takes time and an atmosphere of confidence and trust till diffe-

rences become evident as factors which have to be looked at and understood as part of work-schedule.

- The non homogeneity of background and language can be made an extra value if taken seriously and if reflected by the group as an asset in resources. The group will get stuck and reproduce the individual parts if this factor remains ignored.
- A group of this dimension and heterogeneity is dependent on a high level of independence, labour division and shouldering of responsibility. Division of labour and responsibility have to work at a long distance and for a period of time.

All this requires a very strong sense of being present in a project. At the same time one has to make do with the goals set and with partners at the distance.

This kind of presence asks for a strong investment of extra work in terms of reflecting and writing, processing, exchanging and interacting on informations in huge quantities that take their time for digestion.

Resources always seem to be limited in comparison to what is needed in time, space, in personal and financial terms.

Distances have to be overcome: many and over and over again.

There is the need to clarify terms, categories on a continuous basis with temporary effects and to look upon "language work", understanding and comprehension as essential factors in the learning enterprise.

There is the necessity to see to guidance and steering mechanisms.

All this applies fully to the settings for learners in an open and flexible learning environment (see chapter 3 A and 3 B).

3. IN SEARCH OF BEST PRACTICE

Introduction

This part of the RE-REAL manual has been designed to give room to clarification of terms referred to and to centre the frame-work idea around relevant and clearly discernible issues in OFL. The chapter is subdivided into three sub-chapters.

The first of which **3A)** is termed **Summary on recent literature/research work on key issues in open and flexible learning**. The idea behind this sub-chapter has been to demonstrate what is being discussed in the OFL arena in the light of what has been the starting point and the starting assumptions of the project. There is also another aspect to this chapter: there are certain conceptual notions already proven through practise and research which work as a pre-setting for OFL and should be worked through in order to make the most of any enterprise in the field. The second sub-chapter is called **3B) Concepts and ideas on open and flexible learning**. This sub-chapter looks at ideas in OFL from the other side of the coin. What are the core-issues for RE-REAL partners' work and which of them has got what kind of specific tone and notion in the course of work-experience.

The third sub-chapter **3C)** deals with the **Learning of partners by exchanging ideas**. This part of 3C looks at the process of exchange on the level of awareness-raising on key-issues and learning from notions in practice and it looks at the aspect of exchange in an open learning enterprise.

The development of the RE-REAL project is regarded as a kind of additional mirror for the conceptual matters involved.

A) SUMMARY ON RECENT LITERATURE / RESEARCH WORK ON KEY ISSUES IN OPEN AND FLEXIBLE LEARNING

Through our consortium-building and -becoming process we have in some phases had comparable and common general ideas on what we wanted and then again, sometimes in the very same phases, in time-shift modus or synchronously, it seemed as if we were all working in unfathomable deep waters.

We had set out to delineate the impact of openness in learning as a means to enhance access and broaden participation. We had set out to look at the consequence this general orientation would have and has on the whole context of learning and learning provision.

We were determined to look at the widely used term of life-long learning from the inside out. Who is all this meant for and how does this relate to the ever-more-pressing issue of learner-centred ways of learning and how could ICT help to get closer to the learners' needs and supply more of the latter with better services.

In the course of forging a group out of so many parts, each of them a container of very specific history, tradition and experience in work, we learned two different, on the surface apparently contradictory things: each of us has claimed and claims to practice open learning, so the individual and specific notion must definitely be part of an overall concept; on the other hand there is obviously more need to specify what open learning is about and to set it apart/relate it to a couple of other terms in the field: flexible learning, life-long-learning, distance-learning, skills-learning et al.

It arose as a necessity to re-discover some aspects in the general discussion in the light of our experience as an OFL group and at the same time to allow for a sharper and more precise distinction between terms.

When one plunges into one of the two sides: either the more faceted end or the more restricted meaning of the term open learning, the other one keeps raising its head.

We had to cope with the fact that both elements were present in the open learning context: the side of little defined circumscriptions and the apparently clearly defined. The need among the project-team has arisen many times and comes flowing back again and again to discuss and re-discuss central and key issues and to try to re-define and to argue to get things better sorted out. Out of this resulted our determination to take another look at authors and materials and reflect upon them.

For the reading public we thought it would be more rewarding to read how and where we connected with our thoughts and with all our experience. So, what we are going to do here is to reveal more about our questions and our searches than actually about the material we have chosen (that is what resource-based learning is about). What we would like to convey is the ongoing testing of experience against concepts and concepts against experience by the way we turn back to the general debate going on.

We would like to convey the nature of our motives and our problem-orientated search for solutions (more a constructivist than a replicative approach). We cannot claim to have come to one-in-a-kind underpinnings all by ourselves, the latter would be vain and dishonest. What we can rightfully claim is that for us it has been very important not to declare ourselves as adherents or followers of one or the other set of assumptions but rather as interlocutors, listening, pondering and reflecting, sometimes even juggling with material, experience and know-how in the field.

Blurred and Defined - open & distance learning

When the term open learning was coined in the seventies by the Council for Educational technology (CET) its main focus was on the *systematic removal of barriers to learning* (see the *A-Z of Open learning* by Clive Jeffries, Roger Lewis, John Meed, Roger Merrit, NEC 199.) and the same council knew as soon as 1977, that this meant *an open learning system is one in which the restrictions placed on students are under constant review* (see *Open Learning systems for Mature Students*, Charles Davies, CET). Soon the term has acquired a kind of pejorative notion: second-class, isolated, poor standard and often used as a kind of seductive advert for the easy way to success. It rapidly gains a high-class notion when used as the corporate term for the Open University (OU):

Academics all over Britain accept that the Open University has succeeded, that distance learning works and that the Open University Grades are as good as any others....Emotionally there is still a strong feeling that on-campus teaching in the face-to-face situation is the one way of actually teaching (see, *Distance education trends worldwide* by W.Perry, 1986). The oncoming advent of the Information society issues with their effects on the labour market, the concept of labour, competencies and learning manifest themselves in the references of this last quotation. It also highlights some of the apprehensions and defences brought forward in the debate. Open learning seems to be better seen to in the high-quality realm of distance teaching. In 1993 Roger Lewis defined in his influential article *What is open learning?* the following three key features of open learning:

- open learning is learner centred, rather than institution centred;
- open learning implies the use of a wide range of teaching/learning strategies;
- open learning is about removing restrictions ('barriers') to learning; particularly those barriers inherent in conventional education/training provision.

The nineties saw a thorough debate in the UK on terms, in particular in the magazine *"Open learning"*. The shift between softening and blurring and defining and distinguishing at that time was circling around issues of technology usage and its impact and/or centrality.

Lifelong learning, open & flexible learning

Another debate emerged in this decade: questions were posed as to whether traditional models of schooling and teaching could meet the challenge of the knowledge-society. This debate leaned on and nourished itself from the then on-going efforts among researchers and the ever rising demand for profound and flexible re-schooling, up-dating of qualifications, renewing and re-charging of knowledge and competencies in all fields of work and education. This debate was pushed forward by the European Commission (Teaching and Learning: towards the learning society), the OECD (Learning beyond schooling. New forms of supply and new demands, 1995) and the UNESCO (World Information and Communication Report, OECD <http://www.oecd.org/els/edu>; UNESCO <http://www.unesco.org>) in their attempt to combat the foreseeable deepening rift between information-rich and information-poor and to meliorate exclusion and marginalisation through and in the field of education and training.

The concept of life-long learning formulated in the course of these debates helped to envisage the impact of this task in terms of strategy, policy, operations and instruments. Open learning was brought into the limelight in accordance with its central occupation with different forms of creating and practising access opportunities. From now on traditional and open learning became a kind of a matched pair, no longer exclusively for those in the vein of OFL, but successively for many of those who wished or were circumstantially forced to re-think prevailing strategies in teaching and training. In their 1994 piece Andrew and Maureen Haldane juxtaposed the various components involved in the shift, under flexible learning

Source: *Managing flexible learning* by Andrew and Maureen Haldane, 1994

Traditional learning emphasis:

Memorisation and repetition
Linear and concrete intellectual development
Static and rigid processes
Conformity
Individual / competitive effort
Content learning; teachers as information providers
Departmentalised learning; cultural uniformity
Isolated teaching environments
Technology as an isolated tool
Restricted use of educational facilities
Parental involvement
Autonomy of the community
The Industrial Age

Lifelong learning values:

Excitement and love of learning
Total human capacity in ethical, intellectual and physical development
Thinking, creativity and personal esteem
Diversity and personal esteem
Co-operative / collaborative efforts
Process-learning of quality content; teachers as learning facilitators
Interdisciplinary learning; cultural differences and commonalities
Collaborative teaching environments
Technology as an integral tool
Flexible use of education
Extensive parental involvement
Community partnerships
An information / learning society

The Industrial Age:

Repetitive tasks
Linear production methods: static rigid processes
Departmentalised organisations
Managers giving orders
Narrowing training in task competence
Job uniformity
Isolated working environments
Technology as an isolated tool

The New Industrial Age:

Concern for people's satisfaction
Emphasis on people's development
Thinking, creativity and intuition
Diversity and personal esteem
Co-operative / collaborative efforts
Commitment to total quality; managers as facilitators - broad training beyond task competence

Job variation / job enrichment
Collaborative working environment
Technology as an integral tool
Flexible use of training
Involvement of all stakeholders
Community partnership

Delivery modes and instructing modes

The term flexible is maybe an original loan from Taylorism and the expanding world of Kybernetics. The term entered the world of training first and then through this door it re-entered the world of education. Although in itself on first sight the most vague in the line of the other two, namely open learning and distance learning, its introduction in the world of learning marked the clarification between the dimension of delivery modes as set apart from *instructing modes*. It became by and by better discernible that it was one thing to talk about marked ways of delivery: on a very general level how teaching and learning is organised as such - either face-to face, classical distance and dual-mode - and another thing to talk about the methods and means used and applied in teaching and learning. One could say that this latter distinction marked a turning point in the debate and to some extent also a turning point in broader awareness for the potential of innovation in open & flexible learning. Mirroring each other the term flexible learning has had the historical rather than any specific semantic or pragmatic role of re-instating the term open learning in its full and comprehensive scope. It complemented the declared attempt and declarative aim of opening the learning enterprise as such as it gave flesh to the bone.

Flexible learning refers to the adaptability of learning when it comes to learners' needs and learning needs; it refers to the flexibility in thinking of possible supportive services for this process; it refers to the ideas of materials and instrumental know-how and to learning as a collaborative and creative enterprise.

The term flexible learning freed ideas of openness from the constraints of the distance teaching contexts through bringing to the foreground and in the centre the basic idea of separating teaching from learning in distant education. By doing this methodologists, researchers, educationists set out to explore the teaching/learning interaction and succeeded to understand these two poles better. Out of this grew a concept of learning where teaching was looked upon as enhancing the learning activity and encouraging the learner through guiding with the help of technical and technological means but above all instrumental means.

Learning as adult learning

The nineties more than the eighties witnessed another tremendous change in the training and education sector. The post compulsory sector has become a challenging and huge field of and for learning demand. The challenge and competition among different providers in this field has become fiercer. New groups of providers have turned up, new sectors wish to become players in the field. The traditional idea of a learner as belonging to at least one clear environment has become obsolete as has the idea of

one institution offering learning as input where others harvest and gain from the output. The learning population is highly diverse and as diverse are their needs with one common feature: they look at themselves as partners in the life-relevant enterprise of having or wanting to learn. Learning used to be associated with childhood, adolescence and youth. Nowadays learning tends to become an indispensable and intrinsic part of life-cycles of young and middle-aged adults. Mature students and third age learning environments and facilities turned from a rare exception into a more common and everyday phenomenon. Learning in the workplace, at home, in the community, in centres and in virtual spheres are no longer exclusively technical terms for specialists. Another sector streamed and merged into the post-compulsory sector, all kinds of second chance-education and training.

This development has led to some more extensions and expansions in meaning and reference for the terms open and flexible learning. People already experienced, skilled and knowing wish to be and are to be served with learning on offer and have to be regarded as sharing and equally contributing to this enterprise. Learning has to take place amidst the busy and demanding reality of earning and child-rearing and socially fully responsible adults, and it simply has to adjust to this situation. Learning is to leave the honourable venues and to prove it can also work in the context of differing settings. Learning has to emancipate itself from physical and mental constraints and distances. Venues have less importance than well-thought through supply-systems and services. Feasible and client-orientated networks and area-covering guidance and tutoring as well as fully working and widely acknowledged accreditation and credit-transfer-systems are of greater importance for a rich diversity of offers for adult learners than the number of courses offered and the number of attendants. One precondition for any kind of openness in learning is a thorough knowledge of how things are being worked out in the process of learning

Adult learning, experience and an interacting concept of learning

In his 1998 reprinted book on *Adult Education and Continuing Education*, Routledge, London, New York, Peter Jarvis dedicates an extensive chapter to the nature of the adult learner and adult learning. In the beginning he refers to a still exemplary study carried out in 1990 by V. McGivney on behalf of the NIACE (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education NIACE <http://www.niace.org.uk>), documented in *Access to Education for Non-Participant Adults*, Jarvis found the following deterrents to participation (most frequently mentioned to less frequently)

1. lack of time
2. negative effects of school-experience
3. lack of money
4. lack of confidence
5. distance from classes
6. lack of child-care
7. lack of day-time opportunities
8. education is regarded as irrelevant
9. lack of transport
10. reluctance to go out at night

It does not need much effort of analysing to see that well worked out open learning could and can help towards encouraging and easing participation. But, once the first barriers are overcome many others come to the foreground and keep coming up through the whole process of learning. But this whole process is always reflected in an individual who is a network of culture meeting points in him- / herself.

The culture-individual learning cycle model is a model type of interacting concept. Culture is something real and omni-present and at the same time dynamic and volatile and as such fully effective. There is a kind of on-going exchange between the individual and the cultural environment based on what has been persecuted and adopted in terms of culture and individual experience and on what is being perceived and adopted. This impulse-like and continuing model could be regarded as a model concept for the pattern of lifelong learning and the interactive impact of the latter. This kind of learning is defined as the process of transforming experience into something known, and known of and thus a part of broader experience and knowledge. This knowledge becomes the starting point for the next expansion into experience and further knowledge (Peter Jarvis: *Paradoxes of Learning*, 1992, San Francisco, School of Educational Studies <http://www.surrey.ac.uk/Education/staff/pjarvis.htm>). *Learning then always begins with experiencing, there can be no learning that does not begin with experience although the level of consciousness of the learner plays a significant part in both the experience and the ensuing learning* (op. cit. 1997). Peter Jarvis tries to clarify a concept of experience where the encoding of experience and knowledge/awareness lead to the specific decoding of new and unfamiliar things. *Adults bring to potential learning situations their memories of the interpretations which they have placed upon past experiences, and this has both advantages and disadvantages for learning* (op. cit. 1997) (for instance because of the decline of the memory function, the authoress).

In terms of the interacting mode of promoting learning this construct would encourage teaching as the process of selecting specific parts of the learning culture in order to allow for re-consideration and re-shaping on the learner's side seen in the light and set against his specific world of experience. Experience can be either mainly sensual, or indirect and secondary. To a certain extent every kind of experience relies on the capacity to interfere between what is happening and how this is interpreted and can be interpreted under varying angles.

In the context of this idea of experience the adult learners can make most of their richness of storage they bring to the learning process. They are invited and asked to understand how this kind of experience-making works and thus can make them part of a learning culture of their own and integrate all this in their life culture.

This kind of learning idea for adults and subsequently the aim of opening learning in this vein is the driving impetus behind the REREAL concept.

Learning however, is far broader than enrolling in an educational institution and embarking upon a course - it involves the whole process of social living. (Peter Jarvis, 1997)

Openness towards the diversity of learners' needs

Open education is not about 'flexible delivery' (whatever other term is en vogue); it is about valuing and enhancing the openness of one's teaching or training systems and processes to the needs, interests and contexts of learners, communities, industries or societies more broadly. (Terry Evans, *Understanding Learners in Open and Distance Education*, Kogan Page 1994.) The

book itself wishes to enhance educationalists to become researchers in their own field by sensitising them to the different authentic stories of adult learners: schooling experiences, sometimes full of negative reinforcement, sometimes simply full of boredom; misfortune due to poor conditions, personal or economic disaster, stilted highly developed skills and knowledge ignored so far and little expressively developed likes and strengths. Some people are experienced in some kind of self-organised learning. Others are with learning spells and again those with a strong history of small and at first sight insignificant learning experiences. Evans wishes to show how teachers and tutors can learn to frame their learners, to understand and to interact with them on the basis of what is both relevant for them as individuals and as learners. Evans subdivides his book under 6 headings forming frame-work-conditions for the learner: Money, Gender, Power, Work, Time and Age. Under "Work", the learner C. deplores her overloaded work-schedule: "Husband, home, kids, come first, job second and study last, unfortunately. But there is no way around it. The hardest thing I find is submitting assignments on time, which I never manage to do" and under the "Time"-heading the author comments: "However, understanding the broad nature of the commitment is one thing, and sustaining it each day for such a long period is another."

A very conspicuous set of examples for the idea of diversity of needs of adult learners comes in the handy form of a book of comparative account of experiences of working and teaching in two different European cultures, Norway and Scotland. *Distance Education in Norway and Scotland, Experiences and Reflections*, edited by Judith W. George, Børre Nylehn and Ann Marie Støkken, 1996. In the foreword of the book the idea of comparative study is seen as going beyond the scope of the enterprise. Erling Ljoså stresses that "it is probably closer to a study of how different institutional structures and organisations address some of the needs of students in so-called remote areas" (op. cit). But this is exactly what is needed in finding out the "how to's" in OFL. Cultural background, different kinds of strategic and policy designing and making and the resisting texture of traditionally grown institutions play a major role not only for fail and pass of the OFL efforts, but more important for the quality of learning offered and the extent to which openness and flexibility are used for the better and the best. It is within this context that the essay *The Distance Mode in Scottish Higher Education* by John Cowan is highly informative and to the point of central matters of distinction. Scotland is a good territory for fundamental issues under discussion, since Scotland looks beyond Scotland as a distinct country, and also as a part of the United Kingdom. The Scottish tradition in education is strongly directed towards furthering "the able boy from however humble a background". The geography of Scotland means that *there is dense concentration of population in the so-called 'Central Belt' in Dundee/Aberdeen strip along the north-east and the vast areas with extremely low densities of population, few and poor roads, ... Scotland certainly has a high proportion of isolated students ... Scots are convinced ... that they are different, and (so) must strive to respond to that difference by funding that little extra to mark out their efforts as distinctive.* The decisive factor in allowing room for the diversity in learners' background and needs and learning space for distinction in terms of collective, social or individual cultural trademark is the learner-directed type of instruction. The learner-directed instruction has no specific mode but the pointedness and reverence towards the learner as an individual and as a social being. Whereas teacher-directed instruction follows a directedness of choices and decisions

in matters involved by the teacher, the learner-directed approach enables the learner to find and make their choices. Thus, learning can be as flexible and as open in an on-campus, institutional and workplace environment as it need not be open and flexible in the distance.

The different modes of delivery - whether in technological terms or in terms of physical presence or absence - do not stem from fundamental differences of a pedagogical nature between modes of delivery. They arise because of the potential and constraints of the media, the individuality of teachers and of learners, the ways in which that individuality is expressed in the design of curricula, and the framing of assessment ... The concept of strategic learning, and the distinction between deep and surface approach to learning (Marton et al 1984) are encountered whatever the mode of delivery. So it is the attitude towards the idea of allowing the learner to balance the proportions between the individual and experiential side, the subject- and method-related side and issues of setting and pacing within an organised and well-seen-to network of supply, resource and support which mark the OFL approach rather than the specific field where it might be applied to, or jointly applied within. Where it comes to the matter of distances in terms of bridging and access offers, dual modes offers are superior not because they deliver in two modes, where others deliver in one, but rather because they stick to a subsequent line of pedagogical reasoning where the personal and the physical and the mediated and moderated are brought together in order to provide the most appropriate opportunities to the learner.

The Norwegian Gunnar Grepperud gives witness to the pedagogical approach to learning as being distinctive through his documentation of the rapidly changing institutional landscape in the sector of education in Norway. Once again Norway's geography gives an "ideal image" of remoteness - a cultural issue for elements in participation. "By European standards the majority of our towns would be regarded as villages." Education as an equal right for everybody is regarded as an important value. Innovation in education has caused a kind of disbelief and mistrust in Norway, "belief in the direct, somewhat authoritarian monologue as the true approach for good learning results, is deeply imprinted in the Norwegian culture". But shifting the "responsibility for your own learning" has become a viable route in Norwegian educational debates and actions: With the lifelong learning initiatives on the European scale. With the help of the powerful developments in technology the idea of networking competences in order to decentralise what is there in proficiency and expertise and to bring together institutions for cooperation has become a tendency in educational policy. Coordination and cooperation override envy-enhancing energy consuming in-fight battles. The network model for cooperation is one that brings together experts from different subject areas and allows them to work together in an interinstitutional and interdisciplinary way united by overlapping projects covering a common and a distinct domain of interest. The educational system in Norway - and, one might go further, in all of Europe - has to meet a great challenge. According to the OECD every fourth pupil in the OECD countries leaves lower secondary school saying they never want to go back to school (see there op. cit).

The Norwegian experiences in implementing flexibility in learning have been driven by the credo that didactics are more important than technology. This goes in accordance with what has been assumed by the REREAL project as a *conditio-sine-qua-non* and might be summarised in the words of Gunnar Gepperud: "As long as the use of media is based on technological possibilities, it will obscure the basic needs in every teaching situation. If one has no knowledge for example about group work or dynamics, the problem cannot be

solved by placing a group in front of a television screen or computer. More and better use of media and technology is not a question of technological competence, but challenges first or foremost our professional didactical knowledge."

In an interesting experiential survey between teaching Norwegians in Scotland and gaining teaching and lecturing experience in the Scandinavian countries Sweden, Norway, Denmark, John Cowan reports some of his observations on marked differences between those eager to interact and to question, those only willing to be lectured, with different styles and spans of concentration, preparedness to question and to put down thoughts of one's own making (op. cit).

It is extremely interesting to find an account of a Scottish OU student - a professional engineer working full time during his six year study period. Ian Colquhoun's report can be taken as guidelines for the essentials in OFL, although they come in the vein of a specific experience of one man with a OU offer. He had to get along with OFL material - which meant *I couldn't really progress without comprehending, without acquiring and using abilities, without adequate if not always exceptional mastery*. His counsellor did not only navigate him through timing, assignments, tasks and organisational deadlines, he helped him to continue his studies although he was confronted with great personal loss and grief, he encouraged him to go forward in the open learning mode - and to develop a study technique of his own, although he says he missed the social and group side of learning until he came across a fellow-student and formed a learning pair. He talks about the difficulty of jargon in learning and about the family constraints and rejection of losing a "cherished member" to the learning sector.

Support learning and teaching as support in OFL

When the OU came into being - in 1969 - there were more critical and negative forecasts than positive ones. Newspapers predicted 85% of drop-outs. This was when those responsible started to go against this perceptible problem by the instalment of tutorial services. The term tutorial services is not unanimously used and the services and the terms have become diversified and richer in meaning as well as complemented by other terms, for instance guidance, counselling, mentoring. It seems to be worthwhile to remain with the term tutorial services for a while because this allows a side step into the history of education. In Wei Rufang's *China's Radio and TV Universities and the British Open University: A Comparative Perspective*, ZIFF (Zentrales Institut für Fernstudienforschung - Fernuniversität - Gesamthochschule Hagen: Mai 1997), the author gives a quick rush through the history of philosophical underpinning of education in its elitist and most advanced form, the history of university education (since this kind of education is still regarded as the highest level of formalised education it might well serve as a global prototype for illustration) - from medieval times - from the time when education was a sub-department of faith across the renaissance and reformation - to the advent of science and freedom of expression in humanism - to the Industrial revolution when knowledge became more an asset in itself - alas, an asset for the elite - and the elite included the white male aristocracy and a small selection of the very rich. It was then that the model of tutorial support was in full bloom if only for the happy very few. One tutor assigned to each student, a strict regiment but in full accordance with getting the best in resources, means and opportunities that stands at the cradle of the concept of accompanying a learning individual on his / her way to practical and theoretical knowledge. The transfer of this

concept into an egalitarian rather than an elitist model is a result of a strong tradition of liberal education with its impact on personal growth and knowledge as a means of empowerment for the people (see, *History of the City Lit*, 1992), the system of evening classes brought about through adult education and the university extension movement (dating back to the end of the 19th century and getting into full bloom in the last 30 years, mainly in the closer environment of the UK but by and then encouraging a range of countries with a less strongly developed tradition in extension work.

The tutorial services comprise at the beginning a set of distinct tasks in the range of the learning goals to helping and assisting for personal development and problems guarding as well as problems of subject matter and methods of subjects and learning as such. It is within this context that one can understand the emergence of new forms of books and materials. Books, above all who address the learner and the tutor and the media specialist as much as the writer. *The Open Learning Handbook* by Phil Race, Kogan Page, Ltd, 1993, reprint 1997, is a book of that brand: *Under the heading question "Do open learners need tutoring?" one can find feeling vulnerable and exposed and wondering where they'll find the time, tackling beginning problems as well as learners' needs in mid-course, learners' needs towards the end of the course, the list of 14 dots under "How can a good tutor help"* (op. cit) covers a range of professional qualities: mentoring, guiding, educational and training advice, attentive and skilled listener and analyst, study skills promoter among others. In one of her pieces on *Research and pragmatism in Learner Support*, Bernadette Robinson (1995) finds that the field of learner support is full of prescribing and describing but not so good in empirical data and research. Research so far fails to concentrate on the idea of supportive measures in terms of learning quality but works in the vein of praising the quality of a media, means to lower drop-out rates, description of specific practices. Her term *Learner Support* seems to be the most comprehensive one. She mentions the work of C. Gibson (1990) on applying Kurt Lewin's *Principles of Topological Psychology* (1936) as a theoretical framework. In her attempt to describe the scope of research findings in the field for good practise, she lists:

- learner-institution contacts have a positive effect on performance and persistence
- positive correlation: short-term round times, feedback, pacing help, supplementary material and media
- multiple interacting factors effect the learner success, assistance helps sorting out
- learners do appreciate contact with support staff
- early stages of recruitment and enrolment affect later success or failure
- personal circumstances and lack of time are strong deterrents

Robinson defines three components for learner support. The elements of learner support are according to her studies:

- personal contact between learner and support agents in different roles
- peer contact
- individual feedback activities
- additional material, notes, guides
- study groups and centres - actual and virtual
- access to libraries, laboratories, equipment, communication networks (op. cit)

Those six are the elements, their configuration depends on course, learning goals, settings, occasion and countries and their interaction is a matter of nature of process and

conscious design and can be of great relevance for practises. (Research work in the field of learner support could bring about a more general and widely acclaimed awareness that the shift towards supporting learning is neither a threat for specialised knowledge nor for the specialist experts but simply the appropriate line of measures for the open learning reality.)

Another aspect to the learning support issue is the extension of thoughts in the line of guidance and guidance work and the inclusion of the ideas of information and advice in the more holistic concept of guidance as crucial part of integrating interested learners from all walks of life and thus give them the opportunity to participate in learning. This kind of guidance provision is to comprise all different kinds of learning, in terms of life, profession, perspective and planning. The learning support "movement" has not only challenged the idea of sequential continuity of the learning process together with the initiatives of accompanying the learning process in the long run (tutoring, mentoring, peering) the two have opened a field for applied research and participatory field studies. Initiating and motivating people "on the move" for re-opening their idea of learning and unlocking the learning offers appropriate has been an immediate result of practical research work in the field of guidance.

Guidance is not only a central element in finding one's way through institutional offers or job expectations, guidance is a model idea for providing learners with an attentive ear for their needs and their list of demands opposite the education and training system. It is a kind of feedback mechanism for the richness and diversity of subject areas covered. It is also a kind of "nearly free" study effect since it helps to understand better how learning works with the people and what people want and how they interpret learning for themselves.

A service guidance is in itself an access means for participation since it bridges what is on offer and the person seeking advice or orientation and brings them together through the act of "packing" and "unpacking" information under the vigilance of defined needs with the help of a skilled "needs doctor". Guidance has been regarded as a prototypical model situation for interacting. Both sides in the guidance process take more away than they have brought in and understand more about what has been negotiated than before.

In their book *Open Learning in the mainstream*, Mary Thorpe and David Grugeon, Longman 1994, dedicate an extra part to Learning development and support. By their usage of terms they introduce and pinpoint a different tone into the OFL discourse. The idea of development as a core element in learning. Developmental work is not a condescending charity-driven activity. It is rather the manifestation of the necessity to make learning more fully understood - a task for society and those wishing to become more informed as well as on the part of those who wish to be specialised professionals as educationists, teachers, advisors, counsellors, tutors. Vivienne Ravis (1994) has dedicated much of her work and studies to disclosing the art of "how to" in learning (*National Educational Guidance Helpline and Referral Network: A feasibility study*, edited by National Educational Guidance Initiative / BBC / Broadcasting Support Services, 1993). Vivienne Ravis introduces her essay by explaining the rift that has become apparent between what is regarded as high flying and too ambitious in OFL when it comes to Mr. and Mrs. "Everybody" and what is regarded as too pampering and directive under the term 'learning independently'. It is her aim to show that OFL and guidance are an inseparable couple when openness and flexibility are not ridiculously reduced to better ways of climbing the ladder to the academic honours but seen

as chances for opening the very idea of what is being learned and what can be worth learning. The independence of learners from the individual body or institution, their independence from whether they have already determined to proceed or where, has created a field of intellectual and practical support. In Vivienne Ravis words guidance includes informing, advising, counselling, assessing, enabling, advocating and feeding back. Guidance and Counselling have been used as clearly discernible terms by some, and overlapping or ruling each other out by others.

Guidance is more often used as a generic term (P. Kneafsy, *Learning Support Services in Higher Education*, London Further Education Unit, 1993) and as a practice of opening up learning and embracing new learners in the field of community work, workplace and all kinds of in-between-learning. There have been tendencies to subordinate guidance to a kind of "fitting" career planning, there have been tendencies to promote "intelligent" data provision in high tech form as a substitute for detailed, personal and adaptive guidance, but these approaches have produced their backlashes. For Vivienne Ravis Guidance is at the heart of learning. *"As all learning becomes more 'open' and flexible, with the widespread adoption of modular programmes and with the renewed emphasis on work-based learning, comprehensive guidance systems will be needed to ensure that all learners make the best learning decisions and are adequately and appropriately supported throughout their learning. (...) Guidance practice, wherever undertaken, should be able to demonstrate principles of client-centredness, impartiality, confidentiality, free availability, equity, and accessibility, as well as adherence to codes of good practice. It should be underpinned by explicit policies, specified resources, appropriate organisational structures, including quality systems and procedures for accountability. Each of these factors can and should be linked to standards of service delivery, whose achievement can be ascertained through the use of quantitative and qualitative evidence."*

Being open and flexible on the matter of learning skills

A spectacular campaign and research work in the field of understanding skills essential in learning for grown up people has been done in Finland.

There is an ongoing debate in the field of primary, secondary and tertiary education on learning competences and getting competent in learning. The singularity of the road taken by Tarsa Tikkanen *Learning and Education of Older Workers / Lifelong Learning at the Margin*, University of SYVÄSKYLA, 1998, is her determination to search in-depth what has been claimed in principle, namely lifelong learning.

The government has not only issued a principle decision on its dedication to the cause of lifelong learning, "National Programme for Ageing Workers 1998 - 2002 (1997), it has also been prepared to invest into and to fund research for getting the best in fundamental underpinning for their policy. The authoress has been determined from the on-start to look at research, practice and policy as three closely interconnected layers of the actual situation and has been willing to ask how each of them has led to the status quo. This kind of approach mirrors a perspective coming from within the problem. Tarsa Tikkanen looks at ageing, education and working life and relates each of them to the other. By doing this she avoids a purely functional analysis in terms of "human resource management" and can demonstrate how needs and lacks build an unhappy couple if left to their "natural" way of development. Complex research work in data scanning allowed a differentiated picture of correlation between age and participation in education. Considering the historical context of learning for older wor-

kers, Tarsa Tikkanen discovered the element of experiential and competence orientated learning as the guiding element behind lifelong learning, including the aspect of job-related learning. She could advance her findings by the parameters found within the various systems. Tarsa Tikkanen revealed that the investigated underestimation of experiential learning and competence driven learning styles is a contradiction as such to what has become evident in looking at the elements of knowledge (Mezirow J.: *Contemporary paradigms of learning*, Adult Education Quarterly 46, 1996), namely that learning is the ability to handle and to transgress the many (in)visible borders between experience, knowing and self. Her studies on the situation of older workers has brought the importance of "*practical, local and tacit knowledge and experiential learning*" to the foreground of the whole lifelong learning as well as inclusion enterprise. Her research findings have underlined the necessity to research terms thoroughly (it has taken her 10 years to come so far) and thus to give a clear picture where priorities set will lead to. The outcome will be distinctly different: when older workers are regarded as burden in labour life or when they are acclaimed as a rich source of experience. The outcome will be different when older workers are regarded as outdated types of human beings or looked upon as people with a magnitude of ways of expressing and contributing.

The authoress challenges with the way of acknowledging the needs of a group - at the same time forming a majority in all European societies where old is becoming to be 40+ - and being looked upon as a non-existent group at the margin, on the downhill and shadowy side of life, far away from the limelights - not only the way of treating older workers' needs, but the way needs and wants are recognized in research, practice and policy. All the three ask for the relevance of opening gates for lifelong learning if the latter is actually limited in practice before even starting to signify younger adults till forty and those in employment and under training on-the-job.

The concept called "adultification" (Abrahamsson Kenneth, 1996, *Concepts, organisations and current trends of lifelong education in Sweden*, in *Boundaries of lifelong learning*, edited by Richard Edwards, Ann Hanson and Peter Raggatt, Routledge, OU, 1996) equals post-compulsory education with lifelong learning. On the other hand there seems to be a specific work model claiming to be inspired by job-related work and training, vocationalism, discussed for instance by Roger Harrison in *Personal skills and transfer: meanings, agendas and possibilities* (Abrahamsson Kenneth, 1996, *Concepts, organisations and current trends of lifelong education in Sweden*, in *Boundaries of lifelong learning*, edited by Richard Edwards, Ann Hanson and Peter Raggatt, Routledge, OU, 1996). When looked at in detail each of the two models leaves out the including potential of unbounding boundaries in learning and reproduces a negative selection mechanism generally seen once again with older workers: "*The demands for more training and learning for older adults and workers seems consistently to suggest that it is necessary for them to gain new knowledge and skills, rather than learn to utilize better their existing experiential knowledge and understanding. This reflects the fact that in practice job-related training and learning have predominantly adopted an instrumental and adaptive, reactive and preventive, as opposed to expansive and proactive approach, with goals outside the learning activity or the learner him- or herself.*" Tarsa Tikkanen concludes that all this stands at the head of tightening and thus excluding learning provision for all through the rejection to adopt learner-centred rather than "instrumental" short-time ideas on learning. The example Tarsa Tikkanen describes in a Dutch medium sized firm could be regarded as the still uncashed cheque of competence learning as a task for adult educationalists: when trying to offer continuing trai-

ning for the older employees, after they had been complaining about their exclusion, the main problem lay in developing the course design and inability to adjust the contents and methods of teaching to the level of participants and their low-educational background and rusted learning skills.

In a close follow-up study (Lahm L., T. Tikkanen, B. Heyden und J. Thijssen, *Competence and training of older workers*, on behalf of the European Commission, 1999) field research has clearly shown what seems to be one of the key issues of OFL: competence learning and learning skills development. It turned out that neither rejecting attitudes nor difficulties in grasping technology are regarded as major problems - by older learners themselves - they found themselves lacking in "meta-competence-related skills" such as language, languages, text handling et al.

At first sight it might have appeared to be overloading the truck of older learners to demonstrate a competence-orientated, experiential and learner centred approach to teaching and learning. But at second sight it becomes evident that the problems caused by the external - be they gender-related or racist - are in fact internal problems which pose a challenge not only on education but also on general policy. There have been national initiatives in this line, see Holland, Finland and the UK campaign "older and bolder". It has been in the works of Bob Bell, *The British Adult Education tradition. A re-examination* (in *Adult Learner, Education and Training, 1 Boundaries of adult learning, 2 The learning society, challenges and trends*, edited by Peter Raggatt, Richard Edwards and Nick Small, London/New York, Routledge and the Open University, 1996) or Donald Schön with his reflection-in-action concept *From technical rationality to reflection-in-action* in *1 Boundaries of adult learning*. It is within this very reflective and research-led approach that the idea of material- and resource-based learning stressed by Derek Rowntree since two decades and with even more vehemence in the last years *Making Material-based Learning Work; Principles, politics and practicalities*, Open and Distance Learning Series, (Series editor Fred Lockwood, London 1997) comes to its full bloom and might even lead to a reconsideration of how knowledge must be bundled and directed in differing "packages" to become better milkable for learners and for the learning of providers.

Openness and Information and Communication Technologies

Desmond Keagan is manager of the European Virtual Classroom for Vocational Training Projects at the Audio Visual Centre, University College Dublin. In 1994 he published a paper titled *Teaching by Satellite in a European Virtual Classroom* (Zentrales Institut für Fernstudienforschung, Hagen). Today, in midyear of 2000 this paper seems to be written ages ago - once because of the quick changes in the High Tech sphere and on the other hand because the consummation cycles of books and media seem to become shorter day by day. On the other hand there is Bach, yes the musician, he has now been dead for 250 years (28. July 1750) and seems to have become more appreciated and more popular than ever before; his CDs are countless in numbers and he has entered the virtual space and been modified by electronics only to catch another fan community - absolutely unaddicted to anything that might be reeking of being classical. In allusion to this one can follow David Hawkrige's Big Bang argumentation in his article of *The Big Bang Theory in Distance Education*. David Hawkrige is Professor of Applied Education Sciences in the Institute of Educational Technology of the Open University and refers to the Big Bang of chan-

ging from paper to computers to a certain extent. The article has been written in 1995 and refers to a time span of 10 - 15 years. This is where the allusions redirect directions back to Johann Sebastian. What one can clearly envision is the development of Virtual Classrooms and Virtual Universities but there is and "always" will be the question of quality and how of application. *It is certainly true that methods of using older media such as print, television, videocassettes, radio and audiocassettes are now highly developed. There are plenty of examples of high-quality teaching materials based on these media: in 1994 the Open University received an 'excellent' rating for its distance teaching in management, chemistry and geography when these were assessed by the national Quality Assessment Unit. Methods of using newer media such as computers, teleconferencing and interactive television are so far rather underdeveloped. Bad, old programmed learning is still possible on the new computers.*

Hawkridge is right without doubt and beyond the area of optimistic alluding when he talks about the potential of new media and technology to sustain two-way communication. There is the potential of reflection and understanding, but the key to the score lies in the willingness to refer to these potentials in the form of interaction and exchange between human beings and over human concerns. Is teaching and learning regarded as a superhighway of mobility as well as stability then the new media will be able to enhance both aspects. It is undoubtedly true that access to knowledge - to vast sources of potential learnedness - can be eased and be made accessible for exploitation, but the essential question in all this is who needs what kinds of facilities - be they technological, methodical, organisational, pedagogical - for what kind of teaching. Information services do not only function on different levels for different people they also require a lot of investigation into getting to know what is needed by whom and what might be able to meet these needs. Then there is the overall question of how availability is designed and defined and what kind of access is given for opening the dimension of availability. Learndirect initiatives in the UK launched by the University for Industry Awareness Campaign released in 2000 is a prelude for inclusion, but the prelude, coming back to Bach, is neither the fugue nor the whole melody. This is exactly the pause where Desmond Keagan's work from 1994 could set in. His lay out of approach and concept of describing the Satellite experiment starts with embedding the core elements of education in the history of Europe onto DIALOGUE, DIALECTIC and ANALYSIS conferred to the reality of interaction through "reading" (lecturing, listening, reflecting) and tutoring.

Whereas teaching in the distance used to be juxtaposed to personal ways of communication and doubted and criticised for its impersonality and coldness the development of possibilities to apply a range of means for viewing, listening, attending has opened the idea of interaction as being full of possibilities of integrating the good of the personal as well as the impersonal and to avoid the bad effects of both for the learner. Face-to-face teaching as such has ceased to be the template for personal contact - how many people in Europe have been branded for life because they were disliked or little furthered by their teachers. How many people have been promoted through their teachers - see the regular column in the Guardian Education Supplement every Tuesday where long ago teachers and pupils write about their then interaction and perception and how many have had the opportunity to overcome discrepancies and distances between what they want and where they find themselves with the help of teachers, tutors, access centres, open institutions thought out and working as bridging distances in social, educational and personal terms. The fact that telecommunication can bring together television and telephone can help to under-

stand and to develop what is the potential of face-to-face teaching and tuition and thus allow a non-technical understanding of IT potentialities - and their possible usage: so one can say the distance has led to a better understanding of the personal; the impersonal ways of separating teaching and learning through the arbitrary and often necessary and helpful distance between teaching and learning have helped to understand more what constitutes the personal in personal.

The experiment with Satellite teaching started on 1st October 1993, it consisted of a one year certificate course in Safety and Health Work. The course was taught by the Audio Visual Centre, then there were classrooms all over Ireland in Regional Technical Colleges - in the end 219 students enrolled, the course presented gets itself apart from others dealt with in the US, coming from the Open Learning Agency (Bates see later) and from what Lieve Van den Brande views and discusses in her book *Flexible and Distance Learning* (DELTA Directorate C, John Wiley and Sons, 1993) in five aspects which have been regarded as very important for opening the educational fang: accessibility of a fully accredited course - accredited by University College Dublin boards, the course can be chosen from all over Europe, certification will be part of a European Credit Transfer System and the course is run by the lectures, instructions and assistance given via Satellite, students are being examined by external university examiners. The whole course is comprised of "printed" material, satellite lectures, live and interactive discussions, tutorials and assessment.

To illuminate the background setting of students for this course one has to admit that they were all in employment, with their employers eager to allow time for upgrading and they were given good opportunities as well as strong support. I have quoted this study extensively because I think the survey itself shows what counts in any kind of medial transmittal consideration for quality and appropriate supply and support, this is above all a policy decision, a decision of strategic impact and a willingness to invest in educational technology and in the development of educationists as technologists and technologists as educationists as well as in new forms of structures of provisions on offer as well as in staff development and training in all sectors - be they workplace, communities and institutions open for adult learners. In his paper on *A Dimension of Image Types in Educational Multimedia Materials* Peter Whalley takes these thoughts even further as he discusses the topic of authoring systems as much under the aspects as making best use of image, text, sound in the sense of easy accessibility and through this referring back to what it needs to invest in time, money, structure, facilities and feasibilities to re-dimension what is going on in education. Tony Bates was Professor of Education at Media Research at the OU and worked there for 20 years, he is now Executive Director of the Open Learning Agency in British Columbia. I think it good to leave to him, thus representing Canada, a non European territory, full of experiences with newcomers from a multitude of cultures and backgrounds, the conclusion of our trip into literature on the field. In 1995 A. W. (Tony) Bates published a comprehensive comparative survey under the title *Technology, Open Learning and Distance Education*, Routledge Studies in Distance Education, London, New York 1995, where he thoroughly extemporated on the distinction between media and technology, on one-way-communication and two-way-communication, old and new media. He made it clear that questions of technology- and media-presentation have to be seen in the light of what they transfer and how. Problems posed in education can be neither solved by media nor by technology unless the latter are seen in the light of differentiated decision making and long term investment in structural open-

ness on differentiated levels for differentiated target groups. Openness in strategy planning asks for broadmindedness: teaching and tutoring and guiding might be summarised under mediating, linking, interconnecting and channeling. No matter how many new words we insert and infuse into language, they can do good in combination and addition as long as surfaces, wherever they are and however they are made, are regarded as points of interaction between humans. In 1995 A. W. (Tony) Bates dedicated two articles to the impact of strategic planning and decision making. One in his book edited by him and the other one in *Open and Distance Learning Today*, Routledge Studies in Distance Education 1995, edited by Fred Lockwood. In the latter article Bates describes how the Open Learning Agency has changed above all his vision of its function and role in making the OFL future happen; instead of being a supplier along the growing number of suppliers in the OFDL sector - a sector promising to bring customers and money - it sees its role more in the field of virtual and physical supply of the necessities in strategic planning on the level of policy makers, institutional consultancy and assistance resource supply. The strategic vision means to serve the idea of collaboration and networking above all. These two disrespected in a way so far can be said to equal the OFL framework conditions, as vision and reality.

Abstract:

OFL is a mainstream problem able to tackle three main unsolved problems in traditional learning: access, equity and inclusion. The short summary of secondary research findings - both in form of reflections and actions - are to demonstrate that it is from within mainstream problems that OFL has resulted and that its benefit lies in reaching out. In a way our attempt to summarise and group some of the findings is our share in an activity to reach out. We as individual partners and as a group have tried to reach out to other findings and experiences in order to be able to reach out in a better way to the people who are our end-users. It is thus from the inside out, from the mainstream to the margin, that OFL is suitable for providing answers to problems of minorities, immigrants, those isolated in social and gender respects or affected in their health and constitution. Our work has also the intention to demonstrate that a framework is discernible - both in terms of rethinking institutional forms of organisation in learning and teaching as well as in terms of practising the art of teaching. It goes without saying that this is the very field of Adult Education in all its forms and meanings and in all of Europe.

Gitta Stagl

B) CONCEPTS AND IDEAS ON OPEN AND FLEXIBLE LEARNING (SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF PARTNERS' WORK)

This subpart of chapter three is to illuminate the views adopted by partners on issues in OFL generally looked upon as playing a crucial role. These views reflect on one hand how partners approach their work. They convey to others much about the context of work. The reader is in the same position as each of the partners is in a consortium. He/she views from the outside how perspectives manifest themselves and wonders where they are derived from. By and by - when having the patience to stay with ways of thinking other than one's own - one can look behind the props and get a view of the landscape shape responsible.

This part has come into being by a suggestion to focus on a set of eight core questions in OFL. The partners who found themselves more leaning to one of the sides of the eight - because of their work, because of their field of main interest, because of their expertise - have been asked to initiate a kind of dialogical exchange with other partners. Those in charge have been expected to moderate the discussion thought to follow. To some extent and for some of the eight key issues this approach has worked very well. Partners felt animated to contribute and those chairing these exchanges felt able to summarise. Learners, partners, any kind of people show a lot of individual traits. This also goes and shows in this subchapter. Some partners are used to do their conceptualising activity on their own, they are busy with bringing into their original field of work as much of their thinking as they can and prefer to voice their own thoughts. They are also glad to have at last arrived at concepts of their own with the help of initiatives and thoughts visible in international work and in literature the world over.

There is neither a good nor a bad to either of the two forms. The problem posed is to bring together what can be perceived as different cultures of working and learning. Those partners who are used to work in solitude are simply used to this style of work: they are neither loners nor anti-social. It is simply their way of expressing themselves. Those who are team workers either by their personal nature or having gone through socialising cultures have simply grown accustomed to this style of work: they are neither socially dependent nor somehow lacking in self-confidence. These two cultures manifest themselves across disciplines, sectors, institutions and even within teams. The art of exchanging asks for the acknowledgement of these differences in personal and social styles. To allow a chance for exchanging ideas and making them visible to the reader the project manageress has tried to hold the debate as open as possible by giving structured questions to start one thinking. This kind of starter set has opened the space for two kinds of co-operation, one being a sort of direct exchange, partners have used the personalised mail system on the platform to make sense of each others contribution and have properly discussed things. Other partners have "discussed" in the way of giving their very individual answers to the questions posed. The editor has looked upon the material collocated through these above mentioned procedures as

source material for showing the reader what partners think on particular issues. The reader can also follow some of the crucial points and shifts in argumentation. These shifts are themselves the manifestation of how much context and background influence central ideas of work, they also show how these ideas and concepts will and can change regularly.

This brings us to a point which cannot be overestimated. Openness in educational and learning matters requires above all a broad horizon and a willingness to explore the range of motion. These two ask for a mental and pedagogical attitude where awareness plays a central role. It has already been described in chapter 2 how action and reflection relate to each other in the making of the REREAL project. It must be brought to the mind over and over again that the ability to open up - to become aware of things so far beyond the horizon - is the *conditio-sine-qua-non* for open learning matters. The initiative, the issues and the process of making this chapter are all different aspects of a technique to raise the awareness of partners and of the group as such.

It can be said that some partners are concentrating on the material and resource side of OFL, Some of them including IT, others focussing on IT and the third group deals with literacy aspects in IT. There are partners who have been dealing for years with the way teaching and instructing can be done to the best use for learners and in accordance with learning goals. Others - or some combining the two - have done more in the vein of guiding and counselling and dealing with the essentials of staff training. One can say these differences come in the form of attitudinal traits and do represent a certain aspect of the OFL modal background and development.

Our approach as editors was to let the reader see as much as possible of the processes involved and at the same time see what is being discussed.

All the answers given have been moulded by specific practices, specific backgrounds and by particular intentions. Many of them are maybe not new in terms of novelty for the individual reader, but it might be a novelty for the reader to see that these thoughts are shared somewhere else and are stressed because of a number of reasons. It is this last thought which fits extremely well with our intention as a project team to formulate the essentials of framework conditions in Europe.

I. MATERIAL DESIGN AND DELIVERY MODES

Wojciech Gilewski has set the track for this discussion with his contribution to "Proposal for a standard for written material" (see chapter 5).

There are some authors in OFL who regard the material side as the most important one. Some of the partners can be regarded as followers of this priority list, others look upon material design as a relevant aspect and think that the way of making work happen with material is the most important indicator for openness in learning. In the following question-answer-section the reader can form his own opinion on partners' outlook, the summary is done by the editor.

1. Do you mainly work with brochures, books, "textbooks" (mainly books designed for teaching at a specific level)?

It might not be surprising but the main corpus of teaching and learning material has text form.

2. Do you use CDs, CD-Roms for subject and course work?

Partners do use CDs and CD-Roms but they have only the character of supplementary material.

3. Do you develop material yourself?

Which sort of material?

Most partners do develop CD-Roms but the main activity lies in the field of producing text material, the Slovakian, the Polish and the Swedish partners do develop internet-based material, only one of them, the Slovakian partner, does produce internet-based material.

4. Have you yourself any favourites among the material you or others have developed?

If yes, which?

Please, describe them as closely as possible.

The Italian partner sees its main task in promoting all the materials best suited for specific target groups, the Austrian partners do vote for self-study in using material with well structured support, the Swedish partners have developed an OFL standard of their own - where the pedagogical and interactive aspect comes first and the technological aspect plays the role of the mediator; the English partner is in favour of handouts, the Finnish partner uses a broad range of different text source material, Polish partners focus on textbooks in paper format and do support these paper formats with Power Point Presentation and with HyperText Markedup Language-material, the Slovakian partner does work a lot with web-based material and tries to individualise the web, the Romanian partner does use internet discussion for a lot.

5. What constitutes for you good working / leading / instructing material?

For the Italian partner the best material is the one tailor made for specific target groups, two of the Austrian partners stress transparency of learning paths, the Swedish partner stresses stimulation of dialogue and problem orientation, the English partner sees meeting precisely the needs of the group or the individual as central, the Polish partner highlights group work, the Slovakian partner votes for structure, clarity and simplicity, the Romanian partner votes for attractiveness and interactivity of material.

6. How do you supervise the process of quality insurance: How do you go about to make sure that the things you find essential in material design are seen to by authors, illustrators, data specialists, editors?

The Italian partner relies on testing and reworking material with target groups and improving them subsequently, one of the Austrian partners relies on specialist teamwork with continuous reunions and set time schedules, the Swedish partner works with clear demands specification before setting out to produce, the English partner refers to the strong tradition of question-answer-function as guiding principles for material design, one of the Polish partners works with chosen work teams and fixed deadlines, the Slovakian partner stresses the team leading function and independent expert comments, the Romanian partner tries to find the appropriate specialists in the field.

7. Have you learned (and/or worked together) from (with) other material designing institutions?

If yes, please name the partners or initiators and describe why you have turned to and co-operated with them.

The Italian partner refers to the networking tradition between TANGRAM and a University in Rome, the CLS and the University of Trient and CEDOCS with NETTUNO (see chapter 5), some of the Austrian partners have learned most from the extension movement, in particular National Extension College Cambridge and the Open University, another Austrian partner has learned from networking with a continuing adult education centre (BIFEB), with the University of Linz and with the Chamber of Work in Upper Austria, the Swedish partner is used to having things assessed by study circles, the English partner is an expert in partnership formations on the internal level with curriculum support tutors, on the external level within the framework of the Learning City Partnership, the Norwich Learning Festival and the Employee Development Schemes, the Polish partners have learned a lot from feeding back discussion into improvement and the City of Bath College and the Open University, the Slovakian partner has co-operated with NCDE Dublin and the Romanian partner has good experiences with web designers.

8. What is your 'formula' or better 'idea' of a good material design?

The Italian partner is strongly anti-formula, some of the Austrian partners believe in transparency of layout structure and content, others in the value of guiding manuals or in simplicity and clarity, the Swedish partner is strongly against any Skinner-kind of yes-or-no material and pleads for modular material with room for student initiative and group learning, the English partner speaks out against material solely available on IT and stresses the aspect of comprehension and understanding, the Finnish partner insists on a step-by-step technique and stresses the visual, the Polish partners refer to effective management and planning and the Romanian partner believes in involving the adult self.

9. Have you got the opportunity to realise your concepts?

Is it difficult for you to gain the necessary financial means?

The Italian partner make it possible for the project, the Austrian partners believe in transnational project work and the idea of knowledge centres as supporting means, the Swedish partner strongly believes in the priority of pedagogical aspects, the English partner finds an improved situation through the initiative "inclusive learning" (see also VIII. Staff function and staff training), the Polish partners have collected a lot of experiences in textbook production and projects and find it difficult to get the necessary means, as do the Slovakian and Romanian partners.

II. RESOURCE-BASED LEARNING AND PROVISION

Whereas the material design and delivery mode issue has found great repercussion within the REREAL project group, the range and impact of resource-based learning as such is not a very familiar term for partners. Those active in the field of internet-based material look upon resource-based learning as mainly affiliated with the field of technology, significantly different attitudes can be seen in Sweden and in Norfolk, where this term has been of practical impact as a kind of delivery mode (UK) or as the quite widely spread way of practice (Sweden). Those working in the field of high tech are quite used to finding resources, alas not in their mother tongue (Poland, Slovakia, Romania), only one of the partners is a provider of resource-based material as such (Lernfeld Sprache / Austria). Daniela de Francesch has chaired this group, the material as such has been brought together by the editor.

1. Are you used to working with material coming from other sources than your institution? For example a course offered by another institution, let us say, via the Internet to which you as an instructor / or an instructing institution refer to?

The Polish partners are used to working with reference material; the Italian project CEDOCS is itself a material-resource bank; the English partner offers very specialised tutoring work, the language tutors are very experienced in working with a multitude of media; the Romanian partner can find partners that supply them with resources; the Polish partners use resources but not at university level; the Swedish partner is having a resource-based learning project with 17 popular education organisations sharing resources; the Slovakian partner finds the chances restricted because of copyright matters; Lernfeld Sprache tailor makes resources for course leaders and individual students or groups.

2. Does your institution work mainly with text books and other learning media? Is there a place either in your institution or affiliated with your institution where tutors and learners can go to and check for relevant resources?

The Polish partner is very much for this kind of work but sees restriction in the low level of awareness about possibilities; the Italian partner offers an audio-visual centre as well as an internet research laboratory; the English partner is trying to spread this kind of work through a printed newsletter "Adulation"; the Romanian partner sees this kind of work currently under many restrictions stemming from little developed proficiency in using a range of material; the Distance Education Study Centre (Poland) has an affiliated centre for its work within the main library of the faculty; the Swedish partner comes from a tradition where working in this line is regarded as normal; the Slovakian partner makes use of internet libraries and resources; the Austrian partner Lernfeld Sprache is itself a place where tutors can check for relevant resources.

3. Some institutions try to prepare for the lifelong learning task by looking upon their staff as 'living learning resources', for instance a tutor active in the field of reminiscence work becomes a specialist for oral history questions. Is there a similar tendency in your institution?

One of the Polish partners tries to bring in expert knowledge and to combine this with didactical skills; the English partner tries to encourage cross-sector work for instance art and language; the Romanian partner sees this form given only in very specific fields; the Polish Distance Education Study Centre looks upon its staff as living resources; the Slovakian partner finds the application of this kind of work only viable where target groups are clear; Lernfeld Sprache's staff is made up of specialists in different fields.

4. The Linzer VHS for instance has a 'media point' for learners and teachers, to give them access to more sources of knowledge. Have you got anything similar? (A networking agreement with other learning providers; a collaborative effort with a library or a PC centre or a PC firm; ...?)

The Italian partner has only recently established a media point, TANGRAM also offers a library for its users, the internet laboratory works with the support of two competent net coaches; the English partner is currently developing individual learning centres; the Romanian partner has begun to co-operate with logistic providers in the field of education; one of the Austrian partners located in the Burgenland is planning to establish an information and knowledge centre in Eisenstadt and tries to win a library in Mattersburg to co-operate as an access centre; the Slovakian partner tries to enhance the online availability of resources; Lernfeld Sprache is such a media point; the partner from Upper Austria can provide the learner with three libraries and one media point.

5. Is there a library in your surrounding that could be a potential partner for co-operation, prepared to act as 'another' pillar in learning?

One of the Polish partners sees a problem in the traditional way of running libraries so far; the Italian partner sees a growing readiness of libraries to invest in internet access; the English partner can report of an increasing tendency for libraries to regard themselves as institutions for lifelong learning, they are also promoting readers' groups; the Romanian partner speaks of the open attitude of libraries towards adult education and its concerns; the representative of the Distance Education Study Centre (Poland) talks about the existing barriers towards advanced technology and advanced search techniques; the partner in Burgenland (Austria) can see two potential partners, Europahaus (House of Europe) and Literaturhaus (House of Literature), there is a problem in getting the funding for the personal resources necessary; the Swedish partner sees the libraries on the move but not as vital as he would like them to be; the Finnish partner has just signed a co-operation agreement with the local library and applied for funding of the necessary person staff; the Slovakian partner lists the range of libraries with a broad range of media; Lernfeld Sprache acts as an advice centre for mediating users to the sources available that are most appropriate for them; the VHS in Linz will be housed in a completely new building with a learning and communication centre supported by tutors and counsellors.

6. Does learning with books, audio and video material outside the course material play a prominent role in your institution?

The Polish partner acting in the field of continuing education is working with packages of material that includes media from different sources; one of the Finnish projects addresses search techniques via the Internet; the English partner speaks of a resource basis for the tutors but complains about its embryonic state; Lernfeld Sprache tries to introduce a range of media - internet, magazines, broadcasting series, CD-Roms.

7. Do you co-operate with other resource institutions?

Bookstores, video rentals, internet cafes, PC centres, film houses, theatres/music halls, community centres, others?

The continuing education partner in Poland is familiar with this kind of co-operation; some Italian projects find this kind of co-operation natural; the English partner works together with community centres, libraries and voluntary organisations; the Romanian partner co-operates with popular universities, adult education schools and teaching chamber; the partner in Burgenland is planning to establish this kind of co-operation; the Slovakian partner co-operates with other study centres and universities; Lernfeld Sprache plans to co-operate in this way in the near future.

8. At some universities they provide information centres where students find an adviser, often a senior student. Do you offer any specific coaching which guides them through a specific work project by recommending appropriate source material for making students work with a variety of resources?

The English partner provides this kind of coaching with A-level and with access courses, study skills are integral part of these programmes and they provide a mentoring programme for the University for Care Staff/ reminiscence workers; the Distance Education Study Centre (Poland) works with student advisors; the Swedish partner works with coaches coming from different backgrounds; the Slovakian partner provides tutoring (subject-related) and counselling (project-related); Lernfeld Sprache provides tutoring, mentoring and coaching workshops for teachers, project leaders and tutors and trainers.

9. Many providers in adult education rely on working with various and wide-reaching resources but few are used to the term 'resource-based learning'. Have you been familiar with this term so far? Is this a concept that connects with what you have in mind with enlarging the scope of your way of taking care for your students?

The Polish partner from the continuing education sector pinpoints a lot of formal and mental barriers to this kind of work; the English partner speaks of a kind of gap between resource-based learning and tangible support, sometimes good initiatives are held back by a lack of personal support, he believes in resource-based learning combined with individual learner support; the Swedish partner speaks of decade long tradition of resource-based learning but criticises a tendency to neglect the richness of resources; the Finnish partner finds resource-based learning a reinforcing element for her own work; the Slovakian partner sees himself as a promoter for resource-based learning; the Italian partner sees resource-based learning as a positive impulse.

III. INSTRUCTING MODES AND INTERACTING CONCEPTS

Instructing modes and interacting concepts are of course a main field of work for those whose background lies in the social sciences, for instance partners in Burgenland, Finland, Romania. The Italian projects TANGRAM, CLS and CEDOCS take their theoretical underpinning from communication theory, learning theory and pedagogy. Their concern can mainly be seen in the field of how users can develop as individuals and bring as much initiative as possible to the learning process. The English and Swedish partners do come from two very strong - though slightly different - traditions of learning. In England the adult education sector has focussed strongly on widening access and participation through a more focussed way of learner-centredness and support. The Swedish partner is strongly committed to the tradition of non-manipulative independent learning and tries to develop innovative modes without disturbing this very tradition. The discussion running under this headline has developed differently from some of the other issues. The Romanian partner has brought in a couple of key questions.

- Is it necessary/useful that we should design a 'general strategy' for the REREAL partner countries that considers recommendations of such bodies as European Commission, UNESCO, Council of Europe, e.a.? Which would be the advantages and disadvantages of the existence and functioning of such a strategy? Is there such a strategy in any of the REREAL partner countries?
- How can European co-operation be 'measured'? Is European co-operation really possible as in the area of adult education the primary importance lies with practice, therefore all variables are dependent on it, as well as on local and national tradition?
- To what extent is there financial support at the European and national level for open and flexible learning?
- Is decentralization, as well as promotion and support for local initiatives desirable? How effective is decentralization and which are its perverted effects?
- Is it desirable that there should be governmental decisions (a uniform legislative and conceptual framework) facilitating co-ordination and merging of 'small projects', as well as correlating instructing mode initiatives?

- How can IT interactive methods and means be adapted to target groups (especially disadvantaged ones)? Is it realistic to consider access of disadvantaged groups to IT means? How can OFL 'coexist' with traditional methods and what bridges them?
- How much are self-individualisation] and personalising matters of effective practice in instructing modes?
- How extensive are adequate methods used in REREAL partner countries and with what results? A list of adequate methods would include: personal project method, peer support schemes, learning/training networks, biographies and personal life histories, consciousness-generating strategies/ methods/ techniques.
- Which interactive concepts and instructing modes are most used in REREAL partner countries?

On the basis of this there has been an extensive co-operation between Florentina Anghel (Romania) and Pirjo Keinänen (Finland). Pirjo Keinänen has made a summative report on the answers given by partners.

- The term instruction is often used for describing a kind of teaching that focusses on the way the learner works his way through. Is this a concept that sounds a bell with the way you work?

To feel acquainted with the term "instruction" seems to depend on what kind of teaching you are involved in; teaching technical subjects, languages or IT needs more instructive approach, while in guidance work you promote learning with different methods.

- In any technical discipline the term instruction refers to a guidance in practice, for instance how to construct your own kite or your own radio set. This kind of guiding the learner by a step to step technique of doing has become a model for 'experiential' learning. Is this kind of navigation essential in your work (or an essential goal in your work)?

Step by step technique is the best way to teach the standard way to solve typical problems, specially in technical subjects. Also in problem oriented studies it is important to guide through the different phases and sometimes even in guidance work you give practical instructions how to find the path forward. Opposite to this kind of model of giving way to learn is to manipulate the context so that the student learns unavoidably.

- Any step by step technique requires a very focussed way of interacting (either oral or written). Interacting refers to the successful exchange between at least two partners (what one calls in computer terms "frontend"). For the learning process this means that the teacher / instructor / tutor has to make sure that his explanations / intentions / instructions have been understood / perceived / transferred. How does your institution make sure that this kind of interaction is taking place? Do you offer staff training, continuing education seminars etc.?

Feedback on course plan, aims, objectives, materials etc. is one important way to evaluate the success of the interaction between learner and teacher. Another way to anticipate possible difficulties is to test

materials by splitting them in subunits and giving individualized material where needed. Teachers are supposed to participate in further education offered in general adult education and in specific areas.

- Is it necessary/useful that we should design a 'general strategy' for the REREAL partners where general concepts like those recommended by the European Commission, UNESCO, Council of Europe, e.a. are regarded as a common basis?

Everybody is agreeing that "a general strategy" for REREAL would be necessary, but the "realistic" voices are saying: "feasibility will be limited"; "there is no general strategy even in above mentioned documents"; we have to agree what is important, will we have time to do this?"; "we should have done it two years ago".

(Pirjo's comments: I just read "Lifelong learning: the contribution of education systems in the Member States of the European Union; Results of the EURYDICE survey" and there was nothing said about non-formal or informal learning, my impression was that the term "lifelong learning" is more and more getting the meaning of what formal learning offers, and for the purposes of working life. So I think it would be good if we could say something about the importance of OFL together, as a kind of result of our project.)

- What would be the advantages respectively disadvantages if such a strategy existed?

The advantages would be: common language, better understanding, focus on vital aspects, promotion of ideas, breaking barriers; it would allow us to really work together on central issues and to see how they get modified by practical usage.

Disadvantages could be inflexibility or difficulty to arrive at a common understanding.

- Do you think that teaching modes in your countries have been modified and adapted according to innovative recommendations coming from the EU?

The answers are YES and NO, but everybody is stressing that we are on the way but it takes time to change traditions, and specially teaching traditions.

- Adult education in Europe is a rich field with differing practices. Have you got a better understanding of the differing practices through transnational co-operation? Have you got a feeling for local and national features in partners' countries? Please, take your time to describe thoroughly.

Although structural modes of AE differ much in different countries, the transnational co-operation has been a very good learning process and now we have a much better understanding of what is different and what is the same.

Sometimes the differences are not between countries, differences can occur between different pedagogical views within the countries, too; it would be a challenge to find and understand the roots of the differences and the similarities.

- All findings point out that the essence of openness and flexibility in learning lies in restructuring the idea of teaching (bringing life to abstract concepts). Do

discussions in your country reflect this development?

It seems that this topic is much discussed by experts, but how to get it into living dialogue in everyday teaching situations?

In English language the debate is causing teaching / learning to be almost synonymous and there is a reference to "non-learners".

- Is there sufficient awareness of the impact of appropriate and long-term financial support on the European and national level for open and flexible learning?

Many partners think that there is a sufficient awareness of the impact of financial support. Annual funding causes the fact that nobody can think more than a year ahead. The emphasis on formal learning in AE is forgetting the informal and non-formal learning.

- Flexibility and openness have a tendency towards decentralization. Do you think that the promotion and support for local initiatives is desirable?

All partners agree that decentralisation is the best way to support local initiatives, meet local needs and guarantee individuals real freedom of choice, especially in the field of popular education.

- Could you also think of negative and distorted effects of decentralisation?
If yes, please specify.
If no, please explain your opinion on decentralisation.

As negative effects of decentralisation there is a danger that without openness decentralisation leads to isolation and parochialism. Also bad quality, lack of accountability, sparseness of provision can be negative effects.

In primary, secondary and higher education there is a need for central guarantee of resources and quality.

- A couple of interacting concepts are looked upon as crucial means in rethinking learning, for example dialogue and dialogue practice, pair and group work with resulting presentations, learning results from community works, self-help groups and peer support. Are any of these of significant importance in your work? Are there any others you could add to this list?

All these interacting concepts are of crucial importance in our work, added by "learning through projects", guidance and mentoring & coaching practices.

- Is it desirable to have general governmental decisions (a uniform legislative and conceptual framework) for OFL?

The partners don't want a uniform, legislative framework for OFL, but a framework which would give "an identity", own place in the mainstream, which would offer possibilities for co-operation and resources.

- Is it possible to bring together a way of facilitating coordinative work in OFL and the blooming of 'small projects'?

All partners think it is possible, some have already experiences of that. The co-ordination should be supportive and not too restrictive.

- Have you practical experience with interactive methods with IT? Are these interactive methods adaptable for differing target groups (especially disadvantaged ones)?

Only the Swedish partner has until now concrete experiences with interactive methods with IT. Interactivity means different things in different contexts, the term has to be concretised.

- When you think of your own country / your own institution is it realistic to consider access for disadvantaged groups through IT means?

Everybody is seeing it as realistic; in many countries and institutions there are already projects working on this aspect; handicapped groups, immigrants, unemployed, seniors etc.

- Have you any idea on how OFL can / could 'coexist' with traditional learning / teaching methods? Have you any ideas on how traditional forms and OFL could be brought together for fertile inspiration?

Traditional learning and OFL are not seen as a contradictory, two-class model, but more as a continuum, which allows the coexistence of both methods, complementing each other, so that individuals can move on this continuum according to her/his respective needs and motivations.

- To which extent are self-confidence and autonomous / individualised learning a matter of effective instructing modes?

This question was difficult to answer for most of partners. Some pointed out that autonomous learning is a process where self confidence is needed. Autonomous learning can be supported by reflection and feedback, but self-confidence of the adult person is too complicated to be a matter of effective instructive modes.

- Which methods of instruction do you regard as highly adequate? Please, choose (and add and describe) among the following:

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| personal project method | 5 times chosen |
| -used in all our courses | |
| -if a learner is self-confident and autonomous, it can be a very helpful method | |
| -(good)-- > subsequently | |
| peer support schemes | 5 times chosen |
| -self-help groups - used in all courses | |
| -peer group is very powerful means of learning | |
| -(good)--> subsequently | |
| learning/training networks | 7 times chosen |
| - these are most realistic in our conditions | |
| - essential for horizon broadening | |

biographies and personal life histories *5 times chosen*
-the background of the student is very important in order to find the effective way to learn
-important
consciousness-generating strategies/
methods/ techniques *3 times chosen*
-very important

Often all these methods are so integrated in our work that we are using them flexibly according to situation and learners' needs.

IV. NETWORKING AND 'BEYOND THE WALLS' INTERACTIONS

Nick Meyer has chaired this group. His work consists mainly of establishing and fostering existing networks in the field of guidance, community-based learning and inter-institutional accreditation and participation. Networking is an essential for allowing free permeability between different levels and sectors in education and training without loss of quality. It is also essential for grouping together the necessary expert knowledge normally not available in one institution, clustering together different proficiencies and know-how is an effective way of overcoming negative competitive factors and preparing better ground for a diversity of active and potential learners. There are tendencies to open up and extend the institutional concept of target groups and areas. There is a strong commitment in English adult education to follow a bottom-to-top strategy: finding out what might count for the ordinary learner and developing attractive new forms of enticement in courses. With the reminiscence work for instance the English partner has reached out to staff training matters and university education and at the same time developed mentoring programmes - this has only been possible because of the positive response to networking. The English partner has brought in his ideas, they have been melted with aspects brought in by others and Nick Meyer has summarised the discussion on this issue.

1. Which other organisations do you network with?

The organisations with which the European partners network, vary widely from country to country. Below are some of the findings:

- In South Tyrol, Italy, the office for Adult Education networks with all organisations involved in Adult Education. Similarly, in the UK, the Norfolk Adult Education Service networks with local councils, voluntary organisations and the local Careers Service, as well as with colleges, schools, and the University of East Anglia.
- In Poland, however, it can be difficult to work with different universities, due to competition between them. Networking does take place with continuing education centres and distance learning institutions.
- In the case of Sweden, the partners network with DISTUM - the new Swedish distance education authority as well as networking with an IT Foundation, the State IT Commission to some extent, their three member organisations and local study

associations and folk high schools.

- 1a. Try to comment in detail on those institutions you network with which are relevant for you because they help you to develop your policy in the field of OFL and other areas of your work.

Lernfeld Sprache, in Austria, tries to network with other organisations which are active in adult education - not only those who provide certificated courses for adults, but also those who provide arts courses and use creative learning styles. Meanwhile, in Romania, the most relevant partnerships are between a number of non-governmental organisations and teacher training organisations.

Both the Polish and Swedish partners stressed that they tried to work with organisations who specialised in different subjects or had different ways of thinking. The Romanian partners also pointed out that the institutions they were involved with depended on the projects they were involved in at any given time.

- 1b. Have you any networking form in the kind of a programming or pressure group - for instance, a committee summoned by governmental institutions on behalf of key issues of your work?

There was a division between the partners, between those who are not involved in lobbying governments and those who are. For instance:

- The Polish, Italian and Austrian partners are not involved with pressure groups or governmental committees. Lernfeld Sprache felt that this was unfortunate, as the governmental institutions in Austria seemed unfamiliar with OFL and also seemed to undervalue adult-centred learning.
- The Romanian partners work with trade unions from time to time, whilst in the UK, the Norfolk Adult Education Service works with Age Concern, an organisation which promotes the interests of those over fifty years of age. In the UK the Widening Participation Committee also lobbies on behalf of under-represented groups such as the homeless, the unemployed, or those living in rural isolation.
- In strong contrast, the FBR in Sweden works with the IT Commission, in order to influence decisions on IT infrastructure and to try to promote the use and development of flexible learning across the country. They are currently lobbying for good, cheap internet connections across the whole country - which, they point out, is not merely a technical issue but also a question of democracy and equal opportunities.

- 1c. Do you form part of a network dedicated to designing collaborative work for overlapping areas/target groups/subjects?

All partner organisations felt that they formed part of a collaborative network which produced work for particular areas, target groups and subjects. For example:

- The FBR have a few projects in which study organisations and folk high schools collaborate and, in some cases, offer one another's courses. The Romanian partners also work with community organisations on a project for disadvantaged rural areas.
- In the UK partners are involved with Widening Participation and the Redundancy Advice Network and also sit on the Norwich Learning Shop Steering Group, which

acts on behalf of post-school providers.

- The Norfolk Adult Education Service designs programmes of study through the Open College Network, a local accreditation body. The Austrian Partners also design subject based modules and produce work on learning styles for small research projects.

2. Does your organisation have a policy about networking? If yes, are the networks formal, and how are they organised? For instance, the Open College Network is a union of different learning providers with the expressed aim of allowing learning via accredited units.

Again some of the partner organisations have a policy about networking, whilst others clearly do not and rely on informal networks they have established themselves. For example:

- The Polish partners stated that they did not have a general policy for networking. The Swedish, Romanian and Italian partners all stated that networks were formed if it became apparent that there was a particular need in a specific area of work or project, but these were not formalised.

- Participation in a number of networks has been formalised in the case of the Norfolk Adult Education Service. In this case, participation on boards of the Open College Network, the Redundancy Advice Network and the Norwich Learning City has been written in a job description.

3. How much has the network you are talking about become a real institution? For instance, in Austria there used to be representative organisations for specific professions, let us say social workers, and these organisations later on became the official representatives.

With the Romanian, Austrian and Italian partners there was a consensus that this had not occurred. The Polish partners stated that there were some organisations which had become official representatives in the area of vocational education but not in the field of University education.

In the cases of the Open College Network and the Redundancy Advice Network in the UK, these networks had formalised into organisations which employ staff and have their own specific remits.

4. When a networking institution develops too much of a life of its own, this is sometimes a problematic and contradictory development. The goals of working together are overshadowed by the institutional dynamics. How are the networks you mentioned maintained? Do the networks have specific aims and what are they?

It was generally agreed that the informal networks only tend to be temporary and, at the end of a project, they dissolve. Sometimes, if organisations need to take on board particular findings from the projects, the networks may remain active.

The situation is slightly different in the case of formal networks. The Polish partners felt that, in one case, without a lead institution there was not much activity, although the formal network existed. On the other hand, the British partner felt a formalised network like the OCN, which reported to a steering group which had a cross-section of members represented, worked well as a model, generally. Particularly as the members were asked to act in the interests of the OCN rather than their own establishment.

5. Sometimes organisations have developed a common wavelength or have a specific field where there is mutual interest. The co-operation works on a temporary and voluntary basis. I.e. relationships with other organisations where there is no agreed structure and outcome. Do you have informal networking links with other organisations?

Practically all partners felt that they had informal networking links with other organisations. Many of these links have been described earlier in this report. The study associations form a common network on an informal basis in Sweden whilst, in Austria, Lernfeld Sprache works informally with an organisation on an initiative for the long-term unemployed, by offering workshops on writing. In the UK many projects evolve out of informal networks and shared concerns. Sometimes these informal networks later become policy - for example, the Reminiscence Project.

6. Guidance is another core issue of OFL but there is little sense in offering guidance within the strict confinement of one institution. The very idea of guidance is based on impartial and comprehensive information (and more in-depth coaching) on learning on offer. This concept of guidance goes against the idea of competitive battles over learning clients. Sometimes a lot of barriers have to be overcome in order to convince institutions and authorities of the necessity of a co-operative effort in guidance. Have you come across difficulties of this kind? Have you managed (and how) to overcome them?

Some partners had not had experience in this field - for example, the Romanian partners and one of the Polish partners. The other partners all agreed that there were difficulties in trying to persuade institutions to adopt a co-operative approach to educational advice and guidance.

The FBR felt that the problems were mainly of a formal nature, in terms of not having enough information about alternatives provided by other organisations etc. In contrast, Lernfeld Sprache felt that there was little awareness amongst institutions, of the important part guidance can play in attracting new learners. The Austrian partners were sceptical about a co-operative approach being developed, as competition was so fierce between institutions.

Similarly, the Norfolk Adult Education Service has found training guidance workers from different organisations difficult, due to the competition between institutions. It was felt that this could be overcome if networks were established where members agreed to the principles of impartiality, client-centredness and confidentiality.

In Italy, training in guidance will take place in the next few years, for members of different institutions. This is a follow-on from meetings organised between organisations in the last few years. These meetings resulted, in September, with organisations being encouraged to tell learners about adult education generally, not just about what their office was providing. A booklet was also produced.

7. Can you describe any guidance networks, which exist, in your area? Are there more than one or two and do they work on a competitive basis or do they co-operate?

In Vienna, there used to be a free, impartial guidance network which was closed down, due to a lack of funding from government. A new network has been re-introduced with reduced staff, but there is little co-operation between the institutions.

On a happier note, in Norfolk, in the UK, there are 6 co-operative guidance networks and in South Tyrol, Italy, the network of organisations, as described above, have produced a booklet, CD-Rom and video. The FBR states that there are 25 folk high schools and study associations in their area, who work together on educational guidance, even when they compete in other fields. The Swedish partner comments that "... This has so far worked amazingly well."

V. IT USAGE AND IT LITERACY

This workgroup was chaired by Björn Garefelt and David Jennings. The issue itself invited a lot of reactions and there was a lively and fertile exchange between partners, especially between partners from Sweden, England and Italy. To demonstrate how the discussion developed we have reproduced a general statement via posing four questions by Björn Garefelt:

IT is a means of accomplishing flexible modes of learning for adults. Information technology provides powerful instruments which did not exist earlier. It gives the chance for more people to study, regardless of where they happen to live. It gives the chance for people to combine work and study - you can take part in studies even if you work irregular hours and perhaps you can study parttime where you work ? It gives new possibilities to create communication between students and between teacher and student in distance studies. The dialogue is a vital part of a study process and it can be a integrated part of distance courses.

But still this is not always the case today. There are many obstacles on the way and many aspects to take into account when you try to develop flexible learning. Here are some questions which focus on the interaction between IT and homo sapiens; IT usage and IT literacy. Some strategic aspects are also brought in.

1. Is there a national/regional policy on IT literacy for adults ? Concrete measures ?
On an overall basis IT is a symbol of and also an agent for a new and rapidly changing society. The term often used is "Information Society". This society is in many ways different from the Industrial Society we know. The changes effect many fields: the economy and the labour market, media, peoples' habits and attitudes etc. The risk is obvious - the transformation of society that is going on will produce not only winners but also losers. Factors such as level of education, age, income, region are then important to take into account. Some fear that democracy as we know it will be put under big strain in the time to come, if a fairly large group of the population can no longer identify with and take part in the activities of society.

Access to IT is vital for a universal IT literacy. This can be done by supporting public measures to provide access to computers in libraries, learning centres and other public places. In Sweden e g the libraries are offered better Internet access at reasonable terms by a State initiative. The study associations and other adult educators provide basic IT courses at prices most people can cope with. But in many cases you need further stimulance to evoke interest. Libraries with computers can turn to e g retired people and let them become familiar with IT at their own terms.

Prices of computers and Internet accounts have gone down which have enabled many private persons to buy their own computers. In Sweden this process has been speeded up by the state providing tax reduction for firms who hire computers that their staff can use in their homes at low costs. Eventually the employees can buy the computer if they want to at a low price.

The state must also take responsibility for the IT-infrastructure, in order to ensure that all parts of the country have Internet access at high speed and at reasonable costs. That is an investment in democracy.

2. What are the main objectives behind the usage of IT in adult education ?

Access to studies regardless of where you live

If you live in an area where the courses offered are limited, IT could give the opportunity to study

courses at a distance from e.g. a learning centre, a library or from your home. For many adults with a lack of study tradition, studying alone only by means of a computer is not a realistic alternative. Therefore it is vital that there are support functions at e.g. the learning centre or the library, where leaders, guiders - but not necessarily professional teachers - can give support on technique, study technique and distance studies. They don't have to be experts on specific topics.

Perhaps a group of people could meet and form a group, even if all of them don't study the same topic. This is often necessary to prevent drop-outs, a common flaw of especially earlier distance studies, which mainly suited an elite of highly talented and motivated students.

Access to studies at the time of the day - or night - that suits me

Most people want to meet other people during their studies to get feed-back and social contacts. But if you work odd hours or if you have a handicap that prevents you from taking part in "ordinary" study activities, it does not mean that you cannot study. It means that the study provider must take measures that makes it possible to take part under these circumstances. If you are handicapped and live nearby the place of study perhaps you want to take part in "physical" meetings one or two days a week and meet other students and the teachers/leaders.

Access to freedom of choice between different learning styles and content

This is a big challenge for all providers of adult education - to adjust both content and learning modes according to individual needs. This means that there must be a choice in those respects and also that that the students get the chance to be aware of their strong points. At present technical limitations (band width) prevent development in this field e.g. working with more varied study material using visual elements.

3. How do you take the step from learning about the computer to learning with the computer?

It is of course a natural first step to get acquainted with the functions of the computer and common software if you are supposed to use it for various purposes, one being studies. For some the computer in itself is fascinating and they want to go deeper into the various functions available. For most users however, the computer is a means rather than an objective in itself; you can send e-mail, take part in studies, write presentations, search for information on the Internet etc.

What is needed is an awareness among students what are their needs, to stimulate the students to investigate in what way the computer can contribute to get them where they want to go. It is not a very good idea to make students believe that the only thing that matters is how to deal with a specific software in every detail. When you need this kind of knowledge because you want to do something, for example making a local information village paper, you will be highly motivated to learn Pagemaker or other similar software.

The integrating of IT into various subjects, be it distance studies or not, is a challenge to every teacher. In many cases further training of teachers is needed where they can learn of good practise and find ways of using IT that suit their teaching methods in English, Social Science, Maths or whatever. Many teachers must overcome "the fear of the unknown". Another need is having easy access to useful pedagogic material on the web, topic related material, project experiences, introduction on how to use certain software for different purposes etc. This means that the teachers, leaders - and also their students - must have access to data bases where this information is easily available.

4. What factors determine the choice of technical solutions (platforms, hardware, software) when you use IT in a course? What kind of IT communication is used (text based, video conference, voice) and why?

These questions are crucial and too important to leave to technicians to decide. The "technical" issues often have pedagogic implications and other consequences that could be difficult to handle once the deci-

sions are made. Some examples of questions to ask:

- who are the participants, what are their needs, what do we as provider want them to do on the net ?
- will they study at home using perhaps a computer a few years old and a slow modem or ...? How is the platform software suited for the target group taking into regard its user-friendliness, time to download pages etc

You can add to the list....

In most cases communication is a critical part of any study situation, but communication is even more vulnerable when it is to a large extent depending on IT. There are pros and cons when we speak of choice of primary form of communication. The textbased communication is easy and cheap and can be run on any computer. But it could lack intimacy and nuances - at least if you are over 25 - and it hampers those who are not used to much writing or have problems with e.g dyslexia. Video conference systems have the advantage of showing people on a screen - you can see and hear a person speak which can make communication a bit more personal. On the other hand the technical and economic disadvantages are still obvious for users other than institutions, so it depends on the situation what is possible. Band width is a critical factor for the transportation of pictures.

1. What prerequisites are needed when you start a course using IT ?

First of all a pedagogical concept for the course is needed, where a deliberate use of IT is a part (see above). The course model and the implications of it for the students is important. It should be clear from the start for example if basic computer knowledge is needed and if the students are expected to have access to computers when they are not in the place of study. Does the course imply physical meetings or not, and if so, how often ? What are those meetings concentrated on ?

Sometimes it can be a good idea to start off with a "physical" introduction of the software and methods that will be used during the course. Then it can be easier to get going right from the start, especially if it is a distance course where the students return home and are relying on IT communication.

It is important to make clear from the start what can be expected from each other - from the teacher and from the student. Questions like these should be given an answer: How often are the students expected to connect and be active on the net ? How long do they have to wait for answers from the teacher ? It is often an advantage to be a team of teachers so that it is possible to get an answer practically any time, perhaps even during weekends.

The teachers involved must be aware that the role of the teacher will be more of a guide or coach than of a lecturer. You had better have a flexible mind if you are dealing with flexible learning... The teachers do not have to be very advanced technically, but they should have the chance to get help if needed, for example to produce web based material or other things that require special skills.

The students must have the chance to turn to someone when they have problems of any kind, support concerning the use of computers, help with the planning and carrying out of the course etc. This is important to avoid drop-outs in the first months of a course, especially among the less "brilliant" students who are not used to organised studying.

2. How do you support IT communication in a distance course, between student and teacher and between students ? The need for physical meetings ?

As stated above communication is vital in a course using IT. A good and user friendly conference system is recommended rather than mailing lists or e-mail only.

Communication can take place on different levels. One level is the compulsory communication which is related to handing in papers etc. Another level is the discussion emanating from the course content and the students' experiences. Here activity can vary considerably, as in discussions in real life. For

many participants there is also a need to discuss other items than those directly course related. This can easily be done by having a "course café" where you can talk about anything.

The social process in a group that makes people want to share their ideas with each other is often promoted by an introductory meeting, if possible for at least two days. The meeting should be organised to promote contacts between students and to establish a positive atmosphere and a common "platform" what to expect from each other. As mentioned above this could be a good opportunity to practise the IT communication that will take place after the meeting.

How often physical meetings can take place during a course varies of course, depending on what is possible in the specific case. It could be a limitation in some cases to demand physical meeting if a course is organised on a national level (at least with the Swedish distances). An alternative could be to have "support groups" of students at learning centres, but the course itself provides no physical meetings.

The following are the answers of two South Tyrolean projects, C.L.S. and C.E.D.O.C.S. to Björn Garefelt's questions:

QUESTIONS ON IT USAGE AND IT LITERACY

Question n. 3

How do you take the step from learning about the computer to learning with the computer?

Comments

C.L.S.: The formative goal in learning about the computer is that of acquiring the capacity to work with it. The formative goal in learning with the computer is that of acquiring knowledge and capacity through the aid of a computer instrument. Both these capacities can be acquired simultaneously by a participant in the CLS project. The project proposes observing the processes of perception and acquiring computer science material for course participants.

C.E.D.O.C.S.: the passage to use of the computer as a means of study comes from the need of answering requests, dictated by the necessity of exceeding all the limits given by the required presence in a traditional class or, also, to logistic as well as geographic difficulties.

Within the traditional courses, the passage to the use of the computer, as an instrument that completes the studying process, has been accepted during the lessons in a classroom by the use of the net, one simulates the communication at the distance.

By starting with units/exercises and also using a didactic site (as, for example, www.Thinkwave.com), to which the pupils are connected, exercises assisted by the computer, are tested too.

During the courses that are directly connected with the Internet an online class is organised by the use of specific software. On the site, the appropriate studying materials are available.

Question n. 4

What factors determine the choice of technical solutions (platforms, hardware, software) when you use IT in a course? What kind of IT communication is used (text based, video conference, voice) and why?

Comments

C.L.S. : The technical solutions chosen to begin an experimentation with the use of computer technology in a course satisfy the conditions for a maximum computer efficiency together with a simpler and a more limited use of resources.

C.E.D.O.C.S. : The factors involved are: cost, easiness and degree of interactivity.

The main support is given by the multimedia text / file and in a second stance, chat lines and videoconferences are also a possibility, taking into consideration both the technical capacity of the structures (software, telephone lines) and available hardware used by the attendants.

Question n. 5

What prerequisites are needed when you start a course using IT (access to IT for students, basic computer knowledge, technical support during the course etc.) ?

Comments

C.L.S. : No pre-requisites are expected of the course participants, only the willingness to learn to use the computer instruments. If the students have access to a remote computer, a pin number to the CLS computer system will be provided, otherwise the use of agency resources is foreseen.

C.E.D.O.C.S.: All students need basic computer information as well as basic knowledge of the Internet.

Question n. 6

How can you stimulate a critical analysis of information available on the Internet in a course? How do you avoid the risk that information is regarded as a synonym for knowledge?

Comments

C.L.S. : Stimulating a critical analysis of information available on the Internet is not foreseen in this phase of experimentation, considering that the formative goal of the course proposes acquiring knowledge of the laws of physics and computer agents' material offered on the web. In this phase the information given will be reviewed.

C.E.D.O.C.S. : In a course organised via Internet, the feedback is guaranteed through materials addressed to the teacher. If we talk about activities that request research of materials on the Internet, one tries it utilise the material gathered for the creation of real elements: a new site, an introduction, the first steps with a CD, and so on.

Question n. 7

How do you support IT communication in a distance course, between student and teacher and between students? The need for physical meetings?

Comments

C.L.S. : IT communication in a distance course between student and teacher and between students is supported by e-mail, the exchange of files and consultation on the CLS web site. The project foresees in-class lessons and physical meetings during the various phases.

C.E.D.O.C.S. : We are not talking about didactics at a distance, but about didactics online, which can be totally done on the net, or we can foresee the periodic meeting

with the students and the development of part of the programme in a classroom. In the first case the contact teacher/pupil is accomplished through the exchange of the material. In the case of a chat line, the interaction can be personalised, both with the teacher and among the students.

Alessandro Baccin's answers to Björn Garefelt's questions:

1. About the first question we can say that Tangram follows the learning technique from the pedagogy of Freinet. All activities are based on the learning of notions through standing trials and errors from the student. The role of the teacher is marginal. The student is never left alone and his development is controlled through feedback questions. In the fields of computer science it is to understand as a general input for all the students, followed by practical exercises which each student does according to his own rhythm.
2. In the teaching of IT to adult students we use software and commercial platforms because we think they have a real contact with the reality of the work world. We usually use audio-visual techniques as overhead, video-projector and in Internet, we exchange information through texts (E-mail, net-meeting, chat, video-conference).
3. The agency doesn't request any prerequisites to start a course. On the contrary, during and at the end the course, some tests are made regularly.
4. Tangram tries to stimulate a critical analysis through the presentation of the most creative aspects of the matter. For example, before treating Internet in details, we show the students how to chat or to visit a museum or use a searcher to find documents of personal interest. In this way we avoid to give the impression that information is just pure knowledge, but we show also the practical aspect of it.
5. Our agency has opened a learning centre in Fidonet in 1991. It was constituted by hundreds of documents which could be consulted like in a library. Today Tangram administrates more than a thousand pages with the same system. Every day in average more than 240 people enter in the site www.tangram.it. In the following days the agency will activate a service in Internet only for Tele-learning, with the physical presence of a teacher.

David Jennings' answers:

I would agree with your report and would like to say that it is a comprehensive response to the questions. However I would like to make the following comments concerning the situation in the UK. I have numbered the responses to match the questions in your piece.

1. PCs in libraries and other public places need to be supported by a tutor/facilitator. It is my experience that those members of society who are technophobes need personal encouragement and support in order to let them initially interface with the technology. Provision of ICT equipment alone is only part of the answer. In the UK the state funds qualification courses in designated subjects. These courses are reasonably priced for all learners and free for those in receipt of income related benefits. Are we unique in this respect or is this replicated across Europe? The government in the UK has an initiative called NGFL - National Grid For Learning - this involves getting all schools and libraries "wired up" to the internet and encouraging public access and usage.

2. The Further Education Funding Council in the UK is launching an initiative to train teachers of FE to use ICT in their lessons. This is in the fledgling stage at present, I will let you have details, as they become available if you wish.

3. I agree with your point about technicians, however I feel that the best choices on software and hardware platforms are made when teachers and technicians work together to find a solution.

4. Again I would agree - in your experience with students has this been more successful than with our group? Are students more proactive in their use of the platform?

How have teachers utilised the communications software to communicate? Here we have the facility but I experience from my colleagues in its use. They would still prefer to travel - sometimes long distances - to a physical meeting than to interface with the technology.

David Jennings has answered in the order of the questions posed as has Alessandro Baccin from the Tangram project. The two other Italian initiatives, working with a combination of old and new media, C.L.S. (Consorzio Laboratori Studenti) and C.E.D O.C.S. (Centro di Formazione e Cultura / Weiterbildungszentrum), have with their answers followed the four questions posed.

Other partners who have not participated in the discussion mentioned above have shown their interests and positions by answering some of the questions. Some of the answers permitting a picture of what is being thought and done in the field, can be extracted from the following grouping of answers.

1. Is there a national/regional policy on IT literacy for adults? Concrete measures?

The Slovakian partner says that there is a policy in the making: www.infovek.sk

There is always the money problem and the problem of under-equipment but there is no resistance from teachers' side. There is a significant shortage of software and a tendency towards regarding IT just as an "added" communication channel.

According to the answers of the Polish as well as the Italian partners there is not a national policy on IT and IT implementation developed yet but many institutions try to follow a policy of their own. In the case of South Tyrol see description of projects in Chapter 5, in the case of the Polish partners there is a heightened awareness of the positive effects of IT for assignment work and testing. The Distance Education Study Centre plans to implement the software Topclass, which allows automatic access to web pages and built in e-mail.

In Austria there is no initiative on implementing IT for adults but there are a lot of efforts on the side of institutions, mainly with the help of EU-funded projects, to implement advanced uses of IT in the teaching and learning of adults.

There is a national strategy for the information society in Finland and there are modified campaigns for older people. There is a willingness to finance innovative projects and there is free internet access in libraries as well as initiatives to encourage people to make use of the driver's licence in computer skills.

The Romanian partner reports about some punctual programmes, but no strategic and overall initiative. In the UK there is the University for Industry campaign, see the Clait-Book model, chapter 5.

2. What are the main objectives behind the usage of IT in adult education?

Only the Swedish, the Finish and the English partners can give detailed answers to this question. There is a tendency to invest in tutors and support staff, there is in England the initiative to connect IT tutors via networks and enhance them to share materials. There is also the institutionalisation of appointed curriculum support tutors who visit tutors and provide training. There is also the explicit aim of providing people with work processing, data base, e-mail and the internet and there are a couple of initiatives of community-based learning with the help of IT and encouraging cross-curricula development.

The Finish partner describes the willingness on the national as well as on the regional level to invest in staff development, in generous equipment and in broad participation. There is a reluctance to shift everything in teaching on the PC level. There is rather a tendency to provide multi-modal forms of accessing and of provision.

3. How do you take the step from learning about the computer to learning with the computer?

Once again there are the Finish, Swedish and English partners at the forefront of initiatives. They bring in broader curriculum area needs. There is much cooperation going on among projects and a willingness on the side of strategic planners to invest in what is called providing IT literacy as a means for those so far not familiar and used to electronic formats to become knowing in the field.

Lernfeld Sprache is active in this field too, workshops and tutorials do not only provide the necessary know-how for tutors, they also provide material for working independently with their PC. The material produced tries to make use of a senso-motoric and visual approach and instructions and descriptions.

VI. RETHINKING CURRICULUM DESIGN

Margarete Wallmann from Austria has chaired this workgroup and has shared her positions with Nick Meyer from England and with Florentina Anghel from Romania and with Pirjo Keinänen from Finland.

This aspect of open and flexible learning is not that much represented in the project. Only those partners who are actually working in the field of methodological design and actual curriculum development have contributed to this aspect.

Here are some questions brought in by Florentina Anghel on the topic:

- In which REREAL partner countries the curriculum design for adults is bound to be reconsidered and why (e.g., as part of reform efforts)? Are there any partner countries where REREAL influenced, in any way, its re-design?
- Which countries adopted the life-long learning concept as a general educational principle (influencing the adopting of curricula at all education levels) and which ones adopted it only at the adult education curriculum level (after the 1997 CONFINTEA Conference in Hamburg)?
- Which modifications do REREAL partner countries suggest in order to re-design the curriculum?
- How is the life-long learning principle reflected in content and evaluation objectives of adult education programmes?
- How well is the content of training/education programmes adapted to the labour market demands?

- How do capacities connected with *savoir connaitre*, *savoir faire*, *savoir apprendre*, *savoir transmettre*, *savoir etre* (as Edgar Faure put it) reflect in competencies or educational standards?
- To what extent are content objectives correlated with evaluation (self-evaluation) objectives and to what extent are acquired competencies acknowledged, capitalised and attested?
- Who decides on the curriculum type suitable for adult education?
- How much are adults' own learning rhythms and their opinions on deciding about content being respected and to what extent is the 'temporariness' of competences and knowledge accepted in the curriculum?
- How adapted/adaptable are present contents to OFL schemes?

Here are some comments by Nick Meyer:

Any form of open learning poses a new challenge for curriculum planning and design. How have you dealt with and met this challenge?

Curriculum Managers meet local Area Managers to plan the programme so that it meets local need. The third factor is the nature of the discipline in each curriculum area i.e. each subject has its own inherent discipline. The outcome in terms of delivery varies from "taster sessions" in the health-related subjects, the development of Resource Based Learning packs in IT and a wealth of student support materials in language teaching, on access courses etc.

Learning courses turn into learning activities

Regional activities

Tutors are appointed on the basis of their subject expertise and then offered training courses in the teaching of adults. Some courses e.g. the tutor training for language teachers, call for more specialised abilities, but the tutors on all staff development programmes consider how to develop appropriate aims and objectives, developing resources for their teaching, teaching methods and how to relate those to learning styles, and assessment and evaluation techniques. Some programmes e.g. NVQs are assessment driven and so attendance at the sessions of a course is not mandatory but students are assessed in the workplace, and for us this includes the advanced programmes for tutors.

Have you been involved in regionalisations and how have you designed your curriculum around this aspect?

The North Anglia Open College Network is a regional body which is one of 32 OCNs coming under the umbrella of the National OCN. Programmes are developed locally and recognised nationally. Thus it is possible to develop locally accredited courses in response to local need which are both nationally recognised and which can be used by other providers if they meet their needs. A programme on conservation has been developed in response to the needs of project workers on a conservation project in North Norfolk.

Are you familiar with project-related work and their effect on the curriculum?

A project on widening participation in rural areas - REAP (Rural Education for Adults Programme) developed a number of new ways (for us) of offering courses including running courses on languages in pubs, developing group guidance courses for those who needed more than individual guidance. These programmes, known as "Choosing the Way", resulted in the establishment of local support networks which helped individuals overcome their social isolation and to gain accreditation before going on to college, a formal Adult Education class, or university. Projects are most successful

when they can become embedded in mainstream provision and influence how the curriculum is delivered.

Through all these activities curriculum design has become a more important field of work. The curriculum itself has become broader and more flexible. The planning has become a quite intensive field of work and has also altered the kind of moderators and facilitators attracted:

Can you comment on this out of your own field of work?

Many more courses are modular than before, particularly those relating to vocational education and training. Also specific target groups are being more accurately identified and the curriculum designed around their needs. For example the OCN language programme has been adapted to the commercial needs of employers. This has been offered both in the workplace and in centres. At County Hall one hour sessions are offered to coincide with lunch breaks.

Margarete Wallmann and Pirjo Keinänen comment:

Any form of open learning poses a new challenge for curriculum planning and design?

How have you dealt with and met this challenge?

Here are some of my thoughts, please react by commenting and sharing!

I have found that many changes in this field are due to the fact that the conventional idea of what learning is gets turned upside down through opening up to new ideas and fields of interests as well as to new groups.

I have the same experiences. Sometimes there is a certain discrepancy between my own experiences, adult students' expectations and educational administration about how and in what kind of circumstances the real learning process happens.

Learning courses turn into learning activities

Regional activities

I have been first confronted with this field of conceptive work when I initiated my first tiny and then not so tiny steps towards developing decentralised ways of learning and organising learning.

I had to dedicate time to plan how the community based learning of women in scattered villages and homebound with young children could work out as a continuing activity.

I had to plan a schedule of altering learning activities and topics to keep them interested and involved.

I then had to rethink on a broader scale when it came to setting up and later on institutionalising decentralised centres for learning.

I had to consider environmental aspects and their impact on the people living there and make all this part of the course-offers. I had to consider the capabilities of the people living there and what would be regarded as worthwhile to learn. Who might be able to run such a course and be accepted by the participants.

Have you been involved in regionalisations and how have you designed your curriculum around this aspect?

I have not much experience in this kind of planning. In our Rereal/ A-Info -project we tried to carry out the learning processes in the suburb meeting place, but it didn't work out because we couldn't arrange enough IT there.

Project-related activities

I have witnessed the implementation of learning in connection with topical questions -initiated and carried out by the Burgenländische Forschungsgesellschaft - relevant to the current situation, for instance in 1989, an activity termed "Conversations over the fence" on the occasion of opening the borders to the neighbouring countries.

I had to find new forms of cooperation, to tackle the language problem and to find new places for making learning happen.

I had to find people with the necessary know-how and social skills to see to this kind of learning.

Activities resulted in the making of books, in preparing conferences, in exhibitions, photo-shootings and visits.

The curriculum had to be flexible enough to absorb new and unforeseen developments and still be clear enough for everybody to see the red thread going through.

I had to develop new structures and settings and to find the matching persons to do this work and I had to convince those in charge of the budget to subsidise those activities.

Are you familiar with project-related work and their effect on the curriculum?

We are often in this kind of situation. When a project buys a course from us it is often presumed that we present an exact programme. But like always with adult people you cannot know beforehand what is going to happen. It is very important to have such flexible programmes, that you can design them during the process. But sometimes it is quite difficult to motivate even the students to participate in the planning process, because they have the old learning model in mind. And the budgets are not at all flexible...

Inter-institutional activities and new target groups

The conventional way of curriculum development in AE used to be arbitrary. Courses were offered because participation showed there was a demand and there were people who offered them. Bringing together institutions to make learning more attractive and more accessible include the creation of a couple of beyond the wall establishments capable of providing complementary offers as part of a "more comprehensive " curriculum.

We have created a house for general political education in and on Europe (Europahaus) with a kind of learning offer of its own and unlike traditional course provision.

We have seen to a kind of library focusing on current literary developments in the region and the neighbouring countries serving as a service centre and a function site for lectures and readings (Literaturhaus Mattersburg).

Through all these activities curriculum design has become a more important field of work. The curriculum itself has become broader and more flexible. The planning has become a quite intensive field of work and has also altered the kind of moderators and facilitators attracted:

Can you comment on this out of your own field of work?

We often discuss the problem: what is best in adult education, do you have to be a merited teacher or to have good experience in real life activities? Because these skills not always mix in the same person. Adults have real life experiences and they need to connect the knowledge they get into practise. They feel in a way disappointed if somebody is teaching them and doesn't know about the life they are coming from, it is a sign that they and their experiences are not appreciated, they are not good enough. Another problem is that in the field there are quite a lot of "consultants" who don't know theory and practise, either. As a designer you have to take sometimes risks, when you try to find appropriate teachers.

VII. GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

This group has been chaired by Margarete Wallmann and Lucia Piva. The discussion has been initiated by remarks brought in by Maragrete Wallmann, partners have commented on these remarks.

This issue has been of great interest for partners. The Polish partner, active in the field of continuing education, tells us about a broad range of guidance and counselling offers, mainly in the field of retraining programmes. There are also private initiatives, there is no national guidance system. Institutions are often depending on informal exchange of experience and information but there are concerns coming from open learning initiatives to establish more offers in the field.

The Romanian partner speaks about national guidance systems, but closely connected to needs in formal education.

There is a growing awareness on the necessity of data supply but little awareness on the necessity to supply personalised systems for advice and guidance.

The Italian partner offers direct guidance and counselling in the form of subsidies for umbrella organisations as well as specific projects.

The coordinating function of the Ufficio Educazione Permanente obliges it to provide guidance. There is the booklet "Vivere e aggiornarsi" and a CD-ROM. There is also an internet supply for information and advice. The adult education sector in South Tyrol is organised around the principle of general education. Therefore the guidance and information service is mainly centred around providing guidance and information on leisure time and self-growth courses as well as on languages, history and humanities.

Here are Nick Meyer's answers to Margarete Wallman's and Lucia Piva's questions:

1. Has the impact of guidance and counselling been realised in your country? Has this led to nationwide or local or regional measures and initiatives? What about the financial and organisational side of guidance and counselling?

Yes, though for adults it is mainly short-term funding and therefore rather precarious. There is now a national Information Advice and Guidance (IAG project). In Norfolk this involves delivering training to a range of organisations in Guidance, both OCN Adult Educational and Vocational Guidance and NVQ Level 3.

There is also a national hotline - Learn Direct - which is a freephone number.

2. Have there been any comprehensive surveys on learners' needs and barriers to participation in adult education/professional and continuing education?

Several, mainly published by NIACE. In Norfolk the main barriers to access have been identified as lack of information, costs, poor transport infrastructure and lack of childcare facilities.

We have recently undertaken a survey on referrals and how people find out about courses. The main source of information has been the Adult Education brochure, but a problem has been that while people have increasingly been able to pay by credit card, they are enrolling without sufficient information and therefore there have been high levels of drop-out.

3. Have these studies and surveys led to practical measures?

Development of training for local area managers in guidance and more targeted support for potential students.

4. Is there a range of guidance and counselling institutions? Is there one umbrella institution? Are there collaborative efforts from all sides to bring all the information available together? Or is this a field of competing interests and intentions?
The Careers Service runs the IAG project. The Learning Shop in Norwich is a collaborative project supported by UEA, City College, Adult Education, the College of Agriculture and Horticulture - Easton, and Norwich School of Art and Design.
There is a relatively common approach through participating in projects.
5. Have you got institution-based officers and managers for this kind of provision?
Do they have a specific number of staff allocated to assist them?
It falls within their job description to provide guidance and they do this, though the majority of staff view their role as enrolling students onto courses which are provided by the service.
They have administration support, though until recently funding cuts have made it difficult for them to carry out their roles.
6. Are there any central measures for staff education and training?
We provide training for staff and there is a growing recognition of the importance of guidance both as a tool for widening participation and as a way of identifying learning needs.

VIII. STAFF FUNCTION AND STAFF TRAINING

This group was chaired by Nick Meyer and Björn Garefelt and has mainly attracted comments from those partners who are either active as staff trainers themselves or are immediately concerned with giving their staff the chance to get involved in further and continuing training and education. The group discussion was led alongside a couple of questions. Margarete Wallmann does a lot in coordinating the further education interests of institutions in the region and has developed a further education system for adult educationists and tutors. This modular system is presented in chapter 5 and it shows that open and flexible training modes will be picked up by teachers and tutors when they themselves have developed the confidence to work and to experiment with them within their own field of work.

Lernfeld Sprache does systematic work in the field of training tutors and teachers for self-study supported ways of learning and offers tutorials for know-how in extension structures for institutions and the necessary measures in staff training.

Wojciech Gilewski is involved in staff training and tries to convey didactic know-how in the field of OFL as well as subject knowledge and IT usage in seminaristic form. The English partner is active in the field of providing staff training for smaller and medium enterprises, (see chapter 5) as well as provider of guidance personnel. The Swedish partners have regular seminars for staff and project leaders. They are invited to participate on a voluntary basis and can bring in their suggestions and needs on a long term as well as on a short term basis. The Italian partner provides regular seminars and evaluates them afterwards. The Ufficio works together with the University of Florence and concentrates mainly on didactic and pedagogical aspects.

C) LEARNING OF PARTNERS BY EXCHANGING IDEAS

1) Project and content management, planning and monitoring a transnational project

a) The team co-operation concept

From the onset the Austrian delegates - when asked whether they would be willing to co-ordinate the project - were determined to share co-ordinationship. The co-ordinating task promised to be a big and complex one. The partnership of co-ordination would be based on the following division of labour: The Burgenländische Forschungsgesellschaft (BF), well experienced and familiar with organisation, handling and accountancy in a couple of ongoing projects on the national scale, was to be the co-ordinator. Having worked for years in the broader field of adult education, the BF was interested in getting to know the qualitative leap of change when transferred on the transnational level.

The Förderungsstelle Burgenland (FB) was eager to implement open and flexible learning in the region and had been trying to do this by a step by step technique for years. The task of national co-ordinator and disseminator was tailor-made for this partner's situation. Her work covers dealing with framework conditions and learners' needs because thanks to her style the adult education landscape in the region had begun to be on the move heading towards OFL.

The Lernfeld Sprache (LS) was experienced in research work in the field, in material design, delivery and publishing. The head of LS was and is responsible for a couple of scientific, co-ordinative and publishing projects. LS had also managed a couple of projects in adult education, on literacy related competencies and language and language learning in open learning environments.

The team co-operation concept was a plus and a must. It started with a very intensive period: team co-operation partners came together frequently to tackle an always too extensive list of items. There was a lot to cope with: organisational, financial and administrative matters. From the beginning each partner was involved and had to shoulder a lot of work: the FB was active in the field of winning support on the national and on the financial level. The BF had to find its way through the densely woven jungle of regulations and rules on organisational and financial matters. This latter part of work turned out to be much more work intensive than imagined. There was the additional problem of language transfer and the problem of category transfer; there was besides all also a transfer problem for the different conditions applying to PECO budget and to EU budget.

The LS had to see to all aspects of content, language input and output and had to see to the "transfer" of aims into concrete activities - on the group and partner level. LS developed all of the written material on behalf of the co-ordinating team.

There was always the problem of how to convey and disseminate the regulations studied to partners. A lot of misinterpretations and misunderstanding occurred although everything had been carefully studied, thought through and communicated in detail beforehand.

The co-ordinators had not only agreed to work together as a team but to undergo a supervision on a monthly basis as a means of teamwork and quality control of work in progress.

An institute for interdisciplinary research (IFF) was entrusted with the evaluation. The evaluation was commissioned to a quality control expert on a remuneration basis. In the course of four meetings and with the help of oral and written accounts and documentation the evaluation got the information necessary and developed a model design for an evaluation in three steps. The co-ordinating team assisted in specifying where necessary. The co-ordinating team and the evaluator collaborated in designing and describing a reference system for crucial aspects and issues of group and project work and subsequently developed two questionnaires: one for the operative and for the self-reflective questions.

The operative questions were thought as a step towards stating the status quo and using the latter description for more appropriate measures on partner, group and project level. These questions were tackled in the subgroups and then presented to the whole group. The self-reflective questions were answered in pairs and offered the opportunity to relate one's own perception of own work in the group to the critical comments on development and problems in group work.

The two internal modes of evaluating through operative and self-reflective questions initiated by the evaluator filled and modified by the team were carried out at the Stockholm meeting and an external evaluation was carried out by the evaluator in Norwich 7/99 (see chapter 5, Alfred Lang and Gitta Stagl, *An evaluative approach towards project management*).

b) The steering instruments - work intensity and effectiveness of outcomes

The team took its task seriously. It tried to be conscious of and reflect on its sandwich position between Brussels and partners, between responsibility for tax money and responsibility for work shouldered, between responsibility for outcomes on one hand and partners' needs and situations on the other hand.

The slogan for this task might well be: to make the impossible possible. The large group seemed to be unmanageable. Once organisational matters seemed to be under control, other problems with no evident cause-effect relationship kept turning up again and again.

Tiny things, let alone bigger ones, seemed to take days and weeks to get organised, telephone lines and e-mail systems were hot with activity.

The co-ordinating team realised shortly after the start that this work exceeded by far the work calculated. A new dimension kept defining the pace of developments: holding organisational matters at bay without losing them out of sight, and guaranteeing that partners did what they had promised to bring in.

Partners found it difficult to fathom the dimension of work they had planned and agreed to bring in. Some found it difficult to develop a feeling for their exact focus, others found it difficult to remain focused on one aspect. The majority of partners had to get accustomed to the system of researching and reflecting while doing or planning to do according to the specific parameters.

Time plans had to be overthrown, it was difficult to get the promised contributions. It was difficult to find an appropriate form of using partners' contribution for synergistic effects on group work level or in exchange between partners.

The co-ordinating team (CT) worked very hard and still felt discontent about the effect. Over and over again the CT tried to analyse events and processes and to make the best use of CT resources and partnership resources (see also chapter 5, Alfred Lang and Gitta Stagl, *An evaluative approach towards project management*).

c) The co-ordinating function and the quality of steering instruments

From the very first start onwards each meeting was prepared in detail: work schedules, detailed agendas were written and disseminated. Partners were invited to comment. The agenda was always supported by written material on organisational and financial matters, on work organisation and timing and on specific content issues.

Partners found it not easy to connect. The documents delineated a far stretched horizon of work intentions and high flying aims and the distance between where partners found themselves and where they were meant to head seemed difficult to manage.

The agreement managed to fulfil a symbolic bridging function between the two poles. Thoroughly worked out by the CT the agreement served as a basis for a kind of project organisation and project management discussion. The part on Intellectual Property rights was well received since it heightened the belief within the consortium that things would be handled with honesty and seriousness.

With the agreement partners formulated their exact field of work and agreed to the money for performance system: work has to be done in three scheduled steps: three reporting periods.

Everything seemed to be agreed upon. When the first reporting period came to its close the results handed in showed that partners had completely different notions of reporting: Some handed in material, developed on project relevant issues and opportunities, but not expressly in the context of the project. These materials were immensely fruitful for the project purpose but they had to be studied in detail to dis-

close their value (this was done by the project manageress). Some handed in reports in the form of short notes referring to material already handed in or to oral accounts given. Others developed extensive reports tackling a very broad field or tackling a very specific field. The intended purpose of the reporting system: to demonstrate how one's own starting point, perspective and range of work relates to the overall project aim and / or a specific issue.

The instrument was at once too much directed (partners felt they had to submit to a task) and too little directed (partners felt they didn't exactly know on what to report and how).

The instrument was time demanding. Those more in the line of desk work found it less difficult than those in the line of field work. The material together with the different accounts and reports were a rich treasure box of knowledge, experience and practice. The task of digging was beyond the scope of the reporting concept. The project manageress would have needed more time to navigate and to moderate and facilitate the reporting activities.

The analysis of this problem led to the idea of raising group awareness of the magnitude of material and reflections already generated in the project by making experience exchange visible. The project manageress and her institution prepared posters in A1 format where partners were to put down what they had already brought in and what they planned to bring in within the first contract period. The structure of manual was suggested to the group on the basis of the focus of overall and individual partners work. Partner were to and did add where they felt a clearer idea of the way their work fed into the project and how the project would nourish their work.

The Stockholm meeting had made things feel palpable for the time being. The moment the group went back to work 'the collaborative' product became blurred again and was swallowed by day to day routine. Reports were precise when it came to data and figures, they were vague and revealed little when it came to summarising under an open and flexible learning perspective. If seen from their side only few connections were ventured between needs and wants to possibilities and potential of OFL. There was little to no exchange on the platform between partners and on their ideas.

All documents, the steering ones and those handed in, were transferred to the platform, people opened and registered and took notice but there was no real exchange on assumptions or positions (see chapter 3b, *IT Usage and IT Literacy*).

Already, as early as the project plan, the subgroup concept was mentioned. The subgroups should build smaller forums of discussion on three of the common core issues of the project:

The relation between a) IT usage and openness; b) the diversity of learners' needs; c) the guidance and support services.

The subgroups were to highlight 'their' aspect in the full light of their background and experiences and to give their dimension of literature and to bring these deeper and

newer insights back on the larger group level. There they would lead to a more lively and interesting discussion of how the various aspects interacted.

This concept functioned only on two occasions (in Bolzano as a means to display partner's work; in Stockholm as a means to tackle the operative questions) and found no living continuation on the platform.

The short living existence of subgroup and platform communication and the want of real interaction might be traced back to difficulties of the Re-Real group to accommodate to the possibility of learning through group interaction about resources in the group. One can apply the findings of the report on the folkbildningsrådet (see also chapter 3b, *IT Usage and IT Literacy*, introduction by Björn Garefelt) where it says, that interaction needs encouragement and navigation and thus monitoring; it would have been good if the group learning process had had the privilege of more monitoring and more separate fostering. Shortage of resources on the co-ordinating team side left no space for this kind of activity. The platform problem has continued. The active usage, interacting, has very moderately progressed. The passive usage, the platform as a means of reading, as a means of transmitting information, as a means of sending documents has prospered. In our final report summarising the first year of work we looked upon the problems manifest on the platform as a direct mirroring of the state of consortium work and work progress. The development of the project has taught us to find a more differentiated way of seeing. A more colourful picture evolves when platform interaction is looked at more in detail. There are partners, who are active and ferocious contributors, but not that used to communicating electronically. They need their own time and maybe other distance media for reacting. But in the longer run they do interact with each other on a continuous basis. There are partners who are more solitary workers and stick to their own concept of bringing themselves in and of dedicating the amount of work they are able to manage. These partners used the platform on a regular basis, but do not feel enticed to comment in writing. Whether this behaviour is due to restricted resources or due to a feeling of helplessness when invited to interact with direct aim, remains in the dark. It would require more detailed analysis to diagnose. We think these efforts are worthwhile and therefore we will do more in-depth work in the platform usage in the third year of our work. There are also partners who are used to co-operate via platform and feel at home with communicating lively and spontaneously, they have also no problems in picking up questions and answering requests. The last group is maybe a product of a different kind of work where platform usage and interaction are regarded as two sides of the same coin. Concluding one can say that the platform has definitely become the major instrument for communication and interaction in the second year, it has also been the main instrument for making the manual *Towards a Framework in OFL*.

As a result of evaluation of grip of steering instruments the project manageress developed another instrument for steering through enhancement of activities: The papers and materials were carefully studied and processed into questions of general and specific interest. The open question form was meant to serve as a red thread, a sort of written exchange space for questions, answers and comments. The requests were also to serve as work in progress and to allow rich harvest of the richness of resources

and background. This last way out worked out okay and led to a refined system of requests for various occasions.

Still, answering the requests did not result in heightened activity on the platform or e-mail level, but in the longer run it led to a diversification of platform activities.

The difficulty to come to terms with the respective part in the project showed in recurring debates on meanings and significance of keywords. The keyword definition offer from literature and the partners' initiative to collect and to allocate meanings as part of group activity and project definition were well received and led to the development of a Glossary, see chapter 6.

Analysis, overall diagnosis and consequence were worked out in more detail for interim and final report. In both cases they were meant to result in conscious future steps by allowing positive and productive reflection on group work.

Conclusion: transnational work on an inter-institutional frame is to a very large extent work on the learning experience on the group and partnership level. These processes are new and ask for handling in an innovative and respecting way. The delicate asks for great care and consideration. It also asks for a decisive and responsible handling of steering functions within a reasonable period of time. If considered from the start onwards it might make coping with the task easier.

2) Contributions based on action research and primary research and their impact on open and flexible learning

a) Discriminating and connecting: needs and analysis of target areas and target groups

"The concept of openness"

In the process of bringing to the foreground the distinct needs of partners and users involved in the open and flexible learning enterprise three phases can be distinguished in retrospect: 1) the phase of finding out where partners are positioned within the educational landscape, 2) the process of relating these differences to the potential of open and flexible learning, 3) the stage where it dawned upon the project group that these distinctions and their impact are part of the open and flexible learning concept.

Phase 1: Partners as individuals

In the work schedule for the first year (summarised for the first meeting in Warsaw 9/98) it says under (finding out about) learners' needs and wants: *individual learners' needs and learners as individuals*. On the surface this seemed to be a more or less self-evident aim in work. But in reality exactly this turned out to be a form of novelty for some of the partners involved and quite a shattering experience for the group enterprise. When we set out to work together, for the first time coming together as a whole group, it turned out - first only as a kind of incomprehension towards the aims set -

that each of the partners had either a very explicit aim of his/her own work in the project context or/and a very vague picture of what work has implied in own area of work.

As pointed out before countries and partners come from different backgrounds: where the individualistic tradition is part of the concept of identity and the share of individuals as persons and civic entities is an inseparable part of "collective" tradition (mainly in Northern and to a lesser degree in Western Europe). The Central and Eastern regions of the continent are less accustomed to this kind of thinking and self-perception. In the South of Europe, also set apart from Eastern and Central European developments, the notion of individualism is less rooted when compared to the North and West.

So, on one level, partnership was loose since all partners as individuals seemed to be torn in different directions whereas group as such was not coherent enough to take account of the difference in individual potentials.

Those involved in the set up of distance learning and in the more than sought for connection to modern high tech equipment had a different priority agenda than those who were either not in the vein of distance learning and teaching (out of principle or simply out of a different work environment) or who understood distance learning as part of the flexible learning concept. Then there was a third subgroup of "individuals" in the project: those who were establishing new forms of learning and teaching provisions not available so far.

So, when the Warsaw meeting was over and partners once again dispersed in their different corners in Europe there seemed to be few or very loose connections between what brought partners to the project and the project aims.

Some of the partners involved had a different kind of priority list. Their aim was more due to background setting and impregnation in the line of ODL. Their field of work was clearly connected with distance teaching and learning provision and so their main field of interest centred around issues of distance learning and forms of high class and high tech delivery and dissemination. Their search was more focused on provision forms with IT and managing IT delivery.

The project in its forming had explicitly been asked whether it would rather position itself in the context of ODL. They refused to do so because they rather wished to explore the dimension of openness in terms of "open access", "open choices", "open interactions" in learning.

Some of the institutions involved were eager to follow other strands of development: they wanted to become part of a systematic and critical handling of bringing IT and ITC into learning; at the same time they wanted to explore the potential of bringing "appropriate provisions" close to the learner.

Phase 2: The process of relating individual needs to the concept of openness

When the Bolzano meeting took place much working space was occupied by formu-

lating and discussing the "Agreement" and "subgroup work".

The agreement can be looked upon as a means of creating more coherence in the group. The agreement was meant to allow space for partners to develop their own concept and relate it to the overall issues and it was to weave the parts and the partners into a more comprehensive whole.

The great care invested in intellectual property issues manifested the conviction of the co-ordinating team that partners as individuals were to be fully respected in their field and property. The great care dedicated to the formulation of reporting system, to money transfer and to contribution of individual work on the basis of project work and aims was to symbolise the successful balance between individuality and diversity and coherence in concept and process.

While still working and discussing the instrument for coherence as a group in its paper version (agreement) some of the "fissures" leapt to the surface. The incoherence of partners representing differing user groups became a topic. On one hand the large group of "classical" adult education in the sense of "outside traditional schooling" and on the other hand student population and professionals and managers in search for professional improvement. Could the concept and the work comprise the whole spectrum of learners, providers and professionals involved or was it to create another "exclusive circle"?

When the project group started to work in subgroups [IT and open and flexible learning modes], [open and flexible learners' background], [learning support services] another sensible matter made itself heard: Partners active in the field of distance provisions via ICT were already active and dealing with HTML and wished to proceed further in this direction. Partners dealing with creating new provisions for target groups already involved or new to education were not necessarily interested in technical novelties but in working on the technical aspects as a means of creating "new learning provisions".

The rupture between technical versus social or pedagogical ran like a "red thread" through the project. There are differing individual needs and it is not easy to develop a coherent model on differing assumptions, backgrounds and intentions.

There are partners coming from a technical background and strongly backed by a rich tradition of technical and pragmatism high quality education. There are partners strongly active in the fields of second chance education, working with unemployed and unwaged - often with those with negative notions for institutions and education - and with immigrant workers and others marginalised in one way or the other. And there are partners (some overlap across the three sections) on the move for new provisions in learning, combining the institutional, the "barefoot" and the project orientated "circles and cycles" of work and those more in the vein of the discovery of "wider curriculum areas".

All these strands can be made to meet but only with difficulties within a short period of time, for which core issues have already been agreed on.

But when one draws on literature and secondary research work the problems of diversity of needs and priorities can be observed on a transnational as well as on an international level: There one can find the whole spectrum from "open learning" as such, set apart or together with "distance teaching" via "open learning in distance" and "flexible education and learning".

For the time being the project had to deal with research with a "real" group body and not with literature. The group in Bolzano had to clarify again where it had set its priorities: not on distance learning, since this kind of learning was perceived by some as a concept aiming at the 25% (quoted from the Swedish national representative) only with little to no consideration for the 75% majority.

The group in Bolzano had to clarify again that it was definitely interested in researching distance learning as means of allowing freedom of space, time, range and pace of learning, clearly more within the more comprising context of flexible learning.

The group had to clarify that it was definitely in search of meeting learners as individuals, not necessarily on distance teaching terms but clearly on "distance learning terms" as a means to access those with threshold difficulties and reluctance to join in.

The group had to clarify that the common denominator for IT usage was in the field of allowing communication and interaction over distances and thus the term ICT was chosen in the proposal.

In Bolzano the group expressed its determination to research all the pedagogical ingredients and the whens and ifs essential in making any kind of learning (be it at a distance or face to face) an enriching and "learner orientated" enterprise. Thus the focus on content representation, study of learners' necessities and supporting systems.

Phase 3: Understanding differences in needs as potential of the open and flexible learning enterprise

Bolzano also manifested much of the difference in attitudes and assumptions and priorities. It meant a step forward as a group and this showed in the short interactive boom on the platform - the project's own means of interaction.

The difference in attitudes visible had the advantage of producing a sort of collective feeling for a group of "partners" with different needs. When Stockholm took place there was finally more time to remain with project content issues (as set apart from organisational issues) and to demonstrate the intersection between each partners' strengths, experiences and project aims.

So partners could see what they might be able to gain from difference in background and experience and this acceptance of diversity was also met by a further structural step towards coherence: the structure of manual.

Work was done from both ends of the spectrum: from the project group and from partners' individual motives and intentions for work in the field of open, distance and flexible learning.

The impressive presentation of open and flexible learning models using the distance mode as a means of bringing in the diversity of learning types (Finjala project), the diversity of prospects involved and the diversity of locations (suburban project leader), allowing access for those otherwise excluded (secondary level learning for handicapped), helped to differentiate notions and concepts of learning modes and methodology and forms of presentation, delivery and dissemination.

The ICT usage relevant for the Re-Real enterprise was mainly in the field of conferencing systems, in the field of making communication and interaction possible: both of the latter were a problem for the projects presented (as well as for the Re-Real project). With the Swedish projects presented the group was actually at the heart of what it had intended to explore: new ways of making learning work with the help of new modes for designing and developing rich and two or many-sided working and learning interactions between learners, students and tutors: making the optimum of the learning process in terms of learning outcomes with the aid of ICT as tools.

It was in the aftermath of the Stockholm meeting that the relevance of "key word" clarifications and definitions became evident and was asked for in the group.

With the Stockholm meeting the project group had entered the OFL environment and started to look upon the differences and difficulties in finding ways of communicating and understanding (platform, key issues, priorities) as part of the conditions in OFL and as a productive starting point for describing the "framework" present and also discernible on the transnational level.

b) National background - the framework concept

In "Creating a common basis for talking" it says: *the project aims to develop (subsequently) a framework for the appropriate pedagogical, organisational, economical and technical basic conditions in OFL.*

The project was well aware that differences in settings mattered: It only knew what this meant when differences on the national and institutional level shone through as a decisive element of basic conditions. The varying and differing legal, societal and pedagogical settings have to be acknowledged in full dimension if Europe is to become a united and democratic union of members: all equal, all different! This applies to nearly all aspects: target groups, learning aims, learning environments, learning equipment and social and pedagogical implications.

All in all one can say that even terms applied in describing sectors, fields and forms in education mean different things in the different countries involved. Necessarily and subsequently these differences create differences in focus, orientation, technical and

economical implications and naturally difference of range of motion for developments.

On the transnational dimension it is essential to grasp the fact that certain concepts of education might be familiar and the most natural thing in the world whereas they are simply non-existent and / or unknown in other countries.

Countries which have had the luck to flourish without money inhibitions in times of good economy and had to cope with severe and drastic cuts in less fortunate times for all sectors of education will have a different structural and methodological interaction than countries which have had a very rigid set of ideological brackets over their educational system and which embrace a new and open economy as a refreshing and arising chance to develop new structures.

Coming back to the term of openness it can be easily understood that a country only recently on the road to independence will have another notion of openness (than a partner from another background) - more in terms of enlarging a narrowly defined and circumscribed field of education and "opening up a stuffy room" for a broader view:

"Adult education is characterised as a complementary and at the same time open part of life-long education, which supplements school educational system and which gives adults the opportunity to adapt themselves to changing conditions of development, mainly on labour market" (quotation from current situation in adult education in Slovakia).

A situation like the one mentioned above requires a completely different "gestation" and "idea" of adult education than for instance in a country where the Institute of Mechanics founded an institution called City Lit in the midst of London in the middle of the 19th century to give workers the chance to develop their mind and their personality beyond the strict boundaries set by work and the labour market.

All this leads immediately to the quality of differing notions when it comes to adult education, target groups and needs and thus concepts for provisions.

The adult education sector in Slovakia is strongly dedicated to professional training and vocational education. It is markedly aimed at the labour market and is looking to give supply which allows the country and its citizen to be innovative in the field of professional re-qualifying and post graduate updating. The quickly developing and strongly promoted private sector and massive free market developments create a big demand for a broad range of skilled employees and managers ready to meet challenges posed by a highly competitive economy.

This situation is in sharp contrast to the innovative initiative in Finland launched on a national basis to bring older learners into the hub of societal life by allowing them access to information society means of communication together with the chance to develop the necessary know-how and knowledge of how to handle and work with new technologies. The Finnish initiative expressly stresses the need for this campaign to strengthen and to rely on the long and widely spread and cherished tradition (near-

ly 200 years) of liberal adult education (a notion not even known in some other places of Europe).

What seems to be a question of words and terms on the surface is actually a manifestation of differing developments and of differing concepts. Liberal adult education (the term has been coined in England and is used in the Scandinavian countries, it is also known in Central Europe but with a different notion) has a strong tradition of independent education (independent from labour and functional necessities), addressed at adults and their needs. It is a concept rooted in the overall tradition of the civic society (see history of adult education in Sweden) and it breeds side-branches like the idea of non-formal education, a concept which can be found in Belgium as well as in Spain and in Italy. This side branch has resulted in an offspring of liberal adult education in one region of Europe and can be found in other regions of Europe without the background of liberal education.

All this is again miles apart from the situation in Romania where the country is investing a great proportion of money, experts and initiatives into an innovative thrust to modernise the whole system of education and to meet the high demand of basic and intermediate professional qualifications and to re-direct the whole concept of educational provisions (from primary to tertiary sector) towards more experience led methodology and curriculum.

The comprehensive reform concept in Romania embeds a massive promotion of professional and continuing education as part of an overall legal, pedagogical, organisational and economical programme to innovate high school education, methodological training and education of staff in all kinds of sectors, teachers and tutors' training and re-training (and thus clearly another notion of adult education and lifelong learning).

There is a strong relation between further education and continuing and professional education, all of which are clearly connected with educational and pedagogical reforming. Adults are to benefit from the general reforming steps, they are an essential target group in this concept and they stand at the core of the concept where it deals with professionalising educational offers and provision of vocational training. Adult education refers here more to a segment of societal change and to a range of grownups in a variety of fields from teacher training to training institutes. The term rather delineates a field where many adults are included than a separate sector of educational provision.

The Romanian concept of educational modernisation comprises the whole sector of education and is a strongly pedagogical and methodological concept. Schooling, training, learning will have to be more based on experience learning and independence, more on complex problem solving strategies and a range of communicative literacy, media and research skills alongside professional updating. All this applies to the whole sector of education: in schools, state or private enterprises.

The Romanian reform initiative is strongly promoted and in part also carried out by a national agency for employment and vocational training and is again reinforced by the fact that unemployment is very high. Above all the young are highly affected, espe-

cially those with low skills and little schooling. The vocational and continuing education sector is concerned about the dimension of labour market related problems and wishes to find remedies for allowing adults to make up for wants through a comprehensive concept of continuing education.

The concept of continuing education brought forward by the EDUSTIM (Poland) is again closer related to outreach concepts and extramural co-operation from the side of highly skilled professionals and academics. This concept makes more extensive use of expertise and know-how through providing tailor-made provisions within a network for professional purposes. The latter concept for continuing education is new and in high demand in Poland. It serves as a provision for individuals and institutions who/which wish to find appropriate further training on a high skill and professional basis for work force and staff or instructors involved. The target group addressed is most necessarily grown up, the field is clearly defined: modern professional training with a strong technical direction and with a broad range of professional training skills: technical, social, language skills.

The term continuing education would describe a completely different field of work in Austria and a different one in England. In both countries the only common denominator would be that continuing education is less clearly dedicated to the professional than it is in Poland.

Clearly, the Polish concept of continuing education is an impressive example of the principles of flexible education: to reach out to where demand is, to develop new provisions for new demands in cross-institutional forms and to develop models for "flexible" provisions of education in the work place and during work shifts.

There is once again a crucial change in meaning when the term adult education is applied to distance learning on the tertiary level. The respective paper is consequently titled "Modern History of Distance Education at Warsaw University of Technology".

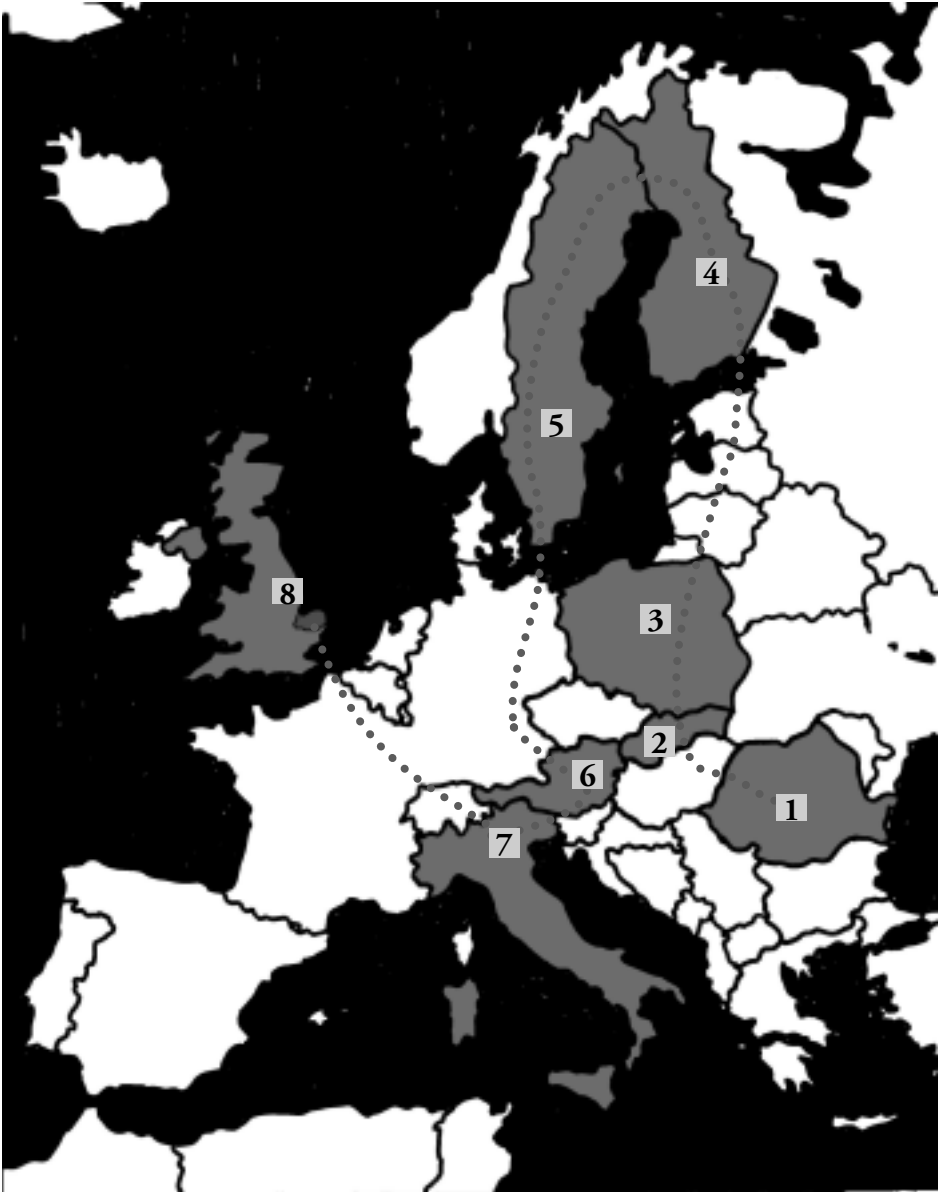
At the cradle for the contemporary efforts in distance education was the plan to establish a Polish Open University with university staff. This plan was abandoned in 1993 and a step-to-step strategy followed, furthered by close links and thorough training units for initiatives with the Open Universities in Europe. After a variety of co-operative links to UK and USA and the subsequent delivery of DL courses there was an even closer co-operation with the Faculty of Technology at Milton Keynes, an overall co-operation in a Tempus project and a distance learning working co-operation with continuing education. In the course of this work and in spite of the lack of support, the distance learning concepts were developed and tested and eventually applied to distance learning provisions for those studying Civil Engineering at the distance. This model is not only working on a grand scale (approx. 50% extra mural students), it is also meant to become an associated model partner for cross-institutional studies and set to be supported and sponsored by a large technological supplier.

The fact that the Polish Distance Education Initiative is in the tradition of OU bases it firmly in an adult education environment when seen from the history of development of the OU in England. It is surely an important initiative in the sense of open-

ness meant by the founders of OU/UK, namely to enable adults who are in employment to continue their education by allowing them freedom of access to studying.

Summarising: In an exemplary way this section of the general report is to give an idea of how far reaching and complex the spectrum of framework description turns out in the end: a variety of sectors, fields of work, target groups and educational activities but also a Babylon of terms and words: Same terms often signify differing things and differing terms stand for the same things.

All this is to demonstrate that characterising framework conditions from bottom to top (action research and primary research) and making them meet top to bottom terms and findings (secondary research, conceptual literature) are basics and essentials in the wheres, whats and hows of open and flexible learning, particularly in adult, but in the longer run in any other field of education.



4. NATIONAL SURVEYS

A) THE NATIONAL / REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE AND THE IMPACT OF OPEN LEARNING INITIATIVES

ROMANIA

Florentina Anghel (ed.)

ADULT EDUCATION IN ROMANIA

Romania today is an Eastern European country eleven years after the collapse of Communism. It regards itself as a democracy with a market economy in the process of consolidation. Since the last elections in 1996 the government consists of a coalition between the Christian-democratic party, the Liberal party, the Social-democrats and the party of the Hungarian minority.

Romania's economic situation continues to be quite critical and unbalanced. This lead to pauperisation and unemployment of the population - not only in Romania, but more or less in all ex-communist countries. It is logical that these phenomena have reverberations in the educational sector - this goes for adult education too.

According to professional literature, but also to various analyses of the programmes and projects operated during the past decade, one can conclude that there is no uniformity in the concept of adult education in Romania today. This is due - among other reasons - to the proliferation of practices and to the fact that these practices generated various concepts adapted to specific needs corresponding to national or local priorities. However, at least three general areas of adult education presently exist in Romania.

Continuous vocational training of adults: often very well structured, institutionalised, formal, well organised, within a legislative framework, funded by the government or by companies that hire qualified professionals.

Popular education: extremely diversified and dynamic, covering various forms and types of training. Very little institutionalised, informal or non-formal, thus making it difficult to evaluate results. Developed by non-governmental organisations or open universities. Funding sources are scarce and unstable.





Basic adult education: ever since its debut in Romania it had no specific framework and no "official" priority among education programmes. Based on popular forms of education, relying on volunteering animators and mediators, supported by programmes funded by foreign donors.

Popular education and the basic education programmes in Romania are designed to meet adult education needs, particularly the needs of the disadvantaged.

There are various barriers to the enhancement of continuous vocational training: Over a period of seven years (1991-1997) only one fourth of the total number of unemployed took vocational training and re-training courses. Only 26% of the participants requested continuous vocational training on their own initiative, the majority took training courses at the recommendation of enterprises or Labour Offices. The course-attendance rate of unemployed was very low, the withdrawal rate 5%. But attending continuous vocational training programmes did not really offer great chances: Only 26% of the course participants were able to find jobs. Even in programmes organised by enterprises the rate of re-employment remained relatively low (35 %).

This is due to the lack of a coherent continuous vocational training policy - for instance, many programmes have a reactive character as they are often adopted in times of crisis or only in the case of vulnerable populations. Additionally there is a lack of a specialised continuous vocational training legislation. The incapacity of enterprises, especially the SMEs, to invest in human resources, the precarious situation of state-owned enterprises and the low rate of privatisation contribute to the difficulties, as well as the lack of qualified training providers prepared for pan-European competition. There are no appropriate institutional structures to meet the needs of a changing economy and there is no system of evaluation and accreditation for training providers. Co-ordination between continuing vocational training and initial training is insufficient. Last but not least, stress is laid too exclusively on the professional side of training, leaving out the social dimension.

There are two major types of training providers: The state providers operate institutions subordinated to the Ministry of Education, training centres organised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and specific training centres for certain departments and fields of activities. Private providers are the employers' confederation, the trade union, foundations, non-profit NGOs, enterprises and the Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

The *target groups* are school leavers and university graduates, long-term unemployed, women and handicapped persons.

The Minister of National Education has characterised the present stage of the educational reform as a *comprehensive or accelerated reform*. The changes are ranked in six chapters: curriculum reform (educational planning, programmes, textbooks) and European adjustment of the national curriculum; the transition from reproductive to problem solving learning and the re-launching of scientific research at the university; new connections between schools, high schools, universities and their economic,



administrative and cultural environment; improvement of infrastructure and connection to the world communication lines; school and academic management reform through decentralisation and increase of the autonomy of educational institutions; advanced forms of international co-operation.

Lifelong Education Concept

Among the legislative provisions of the framework for education proposed by the Ministry of National Education and confirmed by the amendments made to the Law of Education in 1999 were the inclusion of *lifelong education* in the national education system, to regulate the organisation and the functioning of the national continuous education system through educational institutions by changing schools into multi-functional centres for professional training. The development of distance and open education forms was included as well.

The evolution of a *lifelong education concept* became visible by the mid-80s. It appeared in official discourse after a statement of Jacques Delors in 1996. The concept of lifelong learning is a key to the 21st century, trying to overcome the distinction between initial and permanent education, to answer to challenges of a fast-changing world, to show that the return to school is necessary for facing the novelties emerging both in the private and in the professional life of the adult. It is about learning ways how risks and deficiencies of the future can be analysed and overcome, how common projects can be implemented, how conflicts can be solved intelligently and successfully.

The *lifelong education concept* was promoted in Romania after the International Conference of adult education (CONFINTEA V, Hamburg 1997). Education as an important commitment of states, regions, enterprises, trade unions, NGOs and of the local communities. New funding strategies at regional, national and international levels were proposed. This new vision of adult education allowed for a certain recovery of the adult education domain.

In Romania the term for vocational training programmes for adults is continuous training, based on the concept of *continuous education*. This concept aims at teaching how to develop creativity, problem solving abilities, how to learn to use new technologies, how to have access to ODL-facilities etc.

Basic education has become a top priority, basic education programmes account for one third of all training programmes in the world. Pressured by the privatisation of the training services and by budgetary restrictions in education, there is a powerful tendency towards partnership and opening of the education services. Programmes are open, adapted both to the new industrial culture and to a great variety of projects.

Illiteracy

Illetrisme, a term frequently employed in Romania, is a specific French term referring to both scientific and political objectives. In an *illetrisme*-situation are individuals older



than 16, that have been educated but did not master writing and reading enough to meet minimal challenges in their professional, social, cultural and personal life.

There is not really an "open" discussion about illiteracy in the world. More chaste terms are employed - "general training", "oral and written expression", "re-training", etc. Many publications and reports consider illiteracy still as an inseparable component of poverty, instead of approaching this phenomenon as a part of adult education that exists in industrialised countries too. The focus of *illettrisme* moved to language problems of immigrants, migrants, political refugees etc., but the focus had to be extended to populations illiterate in their mother tongue.

After four decades of "silence" in Romania with the absence of an illiteracy indicator from official statistics (due to communist policies trying to hide illiteracy by considering it a failure of the capitalist system) and then one decade of campaigns designed to show the complexity of the phenomenon, illiteracy has finally become a national priority in child and adult education in Romania. There is a tendency now to move from terms like "informational competency" to the term "functional literacy/illiteracy". Criteria for this concept are not only referring to reading and writing standards anymore, but also to the identification of the needs of adults in terms of an effective participation in professional and social life

Therefore after 1990 efforts were made in education programmes to introduce as contents - besides reading and writing - additional professional and technical competencies meant to facilitate the participation of (mostly disadvantaged) adults in economic life. Emphasis was directed towards conveying those reading, writing and computing capacities that contribute to the emergence of a critical conscience for a better understanding of society, thus enabling the adult to create certain personal projects. Literacy was introduced in programmes meant to empower adults to understand, master and transform their own fate.

Institutions and structures participating in the programmes in the area of popular and basic education:

+ Subordinated to the Ministry of National Education:

- *Institute of Educational Sciences* - national research, development and training institution, initiation of evaluation projects, courses, programmes to eliminate adult illiteracy, subject-related TOT-sessions.
- *Houses of Educational Staff* - documentation centres that also offer training for teachers and adults. Existing in Bucharest as well as in all the counties, subordinated to local Educational Inspectorates. These institutions have organised courses and offered various training modules for adults, according to local needs.
- *Centres of Psycho pedagogical Assistance* - operate in all the 41 administrative units (counties) as autonomous institutions subordinated to the local Inspectorate. Guided in their methodological approach by the Ministry and the Institute of Educational Sciences they play a specific role in the counselling of parents and children alike.



+ Institutions subordinated to the Ministry of Culture:

- *Popular Universities*: offer various adult education courses and programmes, "popular culture"-courses. Functioning either as autonomous institutions ("popular university" or "open university") or within local "culture houses".
- "*Cultural clubs*": operate in the administrative-territorial units at rural level (communes).

Other institutions that develop and co-ordinate programmes focused on illiteracy:

- + *Ministry of Justice* - counselling of former prisoners on probation.
- + *Ministry of Interior* - organising literacy and basic education courses for the imprisoned as well as TOTs (Teaching of Trainers) for officers operating courses for conscripts.
- + *Ministry of National Defence* - also offers literacy, basic and civic courses for conscripts.
- + *Ministry of Youth and Sports* - organises non-formal courses, especially for the young, in rural communities. Subjects are Economy and Agro-tourism development, ecological education and training, with emphasis on leisure time.
- + *Ministry of Health* - organises health education for adults, TOT-programmes, in co-operation with interested NGOs.

Non-Governmental Organisations - NGOs

The exact number of NGOs offering courses for adults cannot be evaluated. Actually most youth and Roma-associations will offer courses, provided they have access to (notably foreign) funding. Some of the most active are:

- + *Roma associations*, especially *Rromani CRISS*: organising various projects and programmes to support the Roma minority, in co-operation with local communities, national and international NGOs.
- + *National association of Popular Universities* - ensures TOT-sessions for people active in adult education, develops and disseminates new specific methods, techniques and instruments, in co-operation with similar European institutions.
- + *Foundation for an Open Society* - offers programmes both to educational institutions and to individuals, including the areas of basic adult education and the elimination of illiteracy.
- + *Black Sea University* - summer courses including various topics relevant for adult education.
- + *Romanian Association of Humanitarian Law and Human Rights* - organises TOTs regarding human rights.
- + *PHOENIX-Centre* (Cluj-Napoca) - training and counselling programmes for young people willing to join the labour market.



The specific target groups of popular and basic education for adults are risk groups:

- + those who were never educated, abandoned compulsory education forms or graduated in such education forms without properly mastering basic reading, writing, computing
- + unemployed with a low literacy level
- + socio-economically disadvantaged persons
- + people with health problems or handicapped persons
- + people not properly integrated in the family and/or in their professional or social environment.

The Institute of Educational Sciences organises various programmes and courses meant to eliminate illiteracy:

- + TOT-programmes focused on functional literacy strategies, targeted at educators, mediators and animators interested in training illiterate adults, thus helping teachers to use specific training methods. These programmes were developed as training modules at the House of Educational Staff in Botosani.
- + Non-formal education projects targeted at rural areas, focused on women, aged people, young people returning to rural areas, and minorities (mainly Roma). These programmes were included in the international projects of IEU Hamburg - ALPHA 94; "Strategies for literacy and cultural development in rural areas" and ALPHA 96, "Literacy and Labour".

The *National Education Ministry* initiated literacy classes and programmes - extra-mural courses during school holidays or evening classes, for persons that were never educated or have abandoned compulsory education.

NGOs dealing with Roma, a major risk population, initiated adult education programmes (literacy facilitating classes) for Roma-communities: education for Roma children. Continuous training for educators working with Roma children was developed through funds of the Council of Europe.

The programme, co-ordinated by the Intercultural Institute at Timisoara, partnering with Rromani CRISS, included various activities:

- + TOT-programme for educators, mediators, animators and trainers working with Roma children (in Slatina, Caracal, Timisoara), focusing on facilitating dialogue between local communities and those involved in Roma education, training them with regard to specific strategies and methods for literacy.
- + Project at Coltau - focused on a mixed Hungarian-Roma population, integrated in a larger project with economical and health objectives. Includes literacy courses, Romani language courses, vocational training for the unemployed, religious education, artistic activities.

- + Project in Caracal - focused on Roma population in the Carpati district (roughly 8000 people) confronted with serious economic and social problems and a very low educational level.
- + Project in Mangalia - about 500 families of seasonal agricultural workers, most of them without IDs, living in former military barracks at the outskirts of Mangalia during harvest time. The main focus of the project was on women and on economic and health components, involving representatives of Roma associations and local educators, with co-operation from local educational authorities.

Other initiatives and local projects targeted at Roma education:

- + Project initiated by Rromani CRISS in a Bucharest district - several Roma groups recently returned home after several years spent in Germany. The project, funded by the German association Linden, targeted both those never educated and those who abandoned compulsory education a long time ago.
- + Project at the outskirts of Cluc-Napoca, initiated by the local education authorities and "Médecins sans Frontières", Belgium. Members of the targeted community live in extremely precarious situations, mostly without IDs. Classes for illiterates, support and health education were offered.
- + Art project "Cultural Interferences. Communicating through Art" - funded by SOROS-foundation, European Cultural Foundation and the Roi Bauduin Foundation, co-ordinated by the Intercultural Institute at Timisoara. Target groups: young Roma and other children who wanted to paint. Creation camps were organised in Porumbacu de Jos, Sibiu and Mangalia, benefiting from the expertise of multidisciplinary specialists.



Conclusion

Being involved in EU-programmes such as Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci, Romania certainly did witness progress in the adult education domain during the past decade. The acknowledgement of illiteracy as a complex phenomenon determined by multiple causes generated the initiation of specific training forms and programmes aiming not only at the acquisition of basic competencies but also at solving local socio-economical community problems.

The important role of the NGOs as well as the acceptance of the decentralisation in the adult education sector marked the beginning of an "opening" of the school as an institution.

Unfortunately, these programmes and projects were and are, at least so far, not well co-ordinated. They are dependent on foreign funding and based almost exclusively on the initiative and the enthusiasm of the organisers and on voluntary mediation activities. It is difficult to evaluate and quantify results since the majority of the projects answered to specific urgent needs and is hardly transferable.

Miroslav Babinský (ed.)

CURRENT SITUATION IN ADULT EDUCATION IN SLOVAKIA

100



Political, economical and social conditions

Since the political changes in the year 1989 Slovak Republic (independent state as of 1993) belongs to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe which are transforming its political and economical system towards democracy and market economy. Development of adult education is not limited by any political restrictions now.

The Constitution of the Slovak Republic states in article 42 regarding education that citizens have the right to basically free education, but the right to continuing education is not explicitly defined. Programme declarations of governments are dealing also with further and life-long education (in 1995 - conception of life-long education, in 1999 - attention to further education). In this context we can positively evaluate the approval of the Act on Further Education from December 1997 which not only states the concept and types of further education, but also defines the roles of institutions of adult education as well as its accreditation.

Employment of citizens of the SR shows that from 1993 - 1996 economical activity remains almost constantly high and the number of employees in the educational (state) sector is stable. At the same time it illustrates the proportional change of state and non-state employees and shows the growing number of employees of SMEs.

Measure of workforce activity in the second quarter of 1998 shows that women are nearly an equivalent (44,8%) part of the workforce, but they suffer from higher unemployment rates (12,1%) than men (11,1%).

Analysing the qualification and educational structure of the workforce in the SR we can see that the majority is in the realm of apprenticeship (32,3% in 1998), complete secondary vocational level of education (27,8%).

Most of the registered unemployed are people without work experience (young school-graduates) (21,4%) and unemployed without qualification for any special occupation (15,9%).

The majority of the unemployed are people with apprenticeship training (36,1%), primary (27,2%) and secondary vocational (16,2%) education.

The trend from 1993 to 1996 was the decrease of unemployed graduates of apprentice schools without school leaving examination at the expense of those finishing primary school. Which is from the point of view of education a positive trend, but can be caused by the overall decrease of students in apprentice schools.



From the point of view of qualification the majority of the unemployed are young people without work experiences and those without qualification for any occupation. Together with non-classified they represent more than 50% of unemployed in SR. The problem of young and unemployed without occupational qualification is worldwide and known in all societies. From the point of view of the educational system this problem presents a challenge for improving the process of acquiring practical skills at schools. From the point of view of adult education this great target group presents a challenge for implementing appropriate courses and programmes (active employment policy). The common proportion of unemployed in primary and apprentice education is 63,3%. That indicates points that higher education automatically improves employment prospects. There are two contradictions: 1. Unemployment rate of people with secondary vocational education (16,2%) is unproportionally high. 2. From the point of view of employment, graduates from primary schools have a better chance compared to those from apprentice school - it looks unfavourable to study apprentice school now. This implies the necessity to improve co-operation of schools (above all apprentices schools) with practice and the necessity of retraining in accordance with requirements on the labour market. The changes on the labour market are reflected now by the need to improve the knowledge level of the lowest categories. Conclusions from the point of view of adult education are as follows: 1. There are differences between young people (practical work experiences are needed) and adults (need for retraining of their previously acquired qualification). 2. It is necessary to clarify the role of apprentice schools, and the state responsibilities in management financing between apprentice schools and enterprises. 3. People with low education and their incapability and lack of interest to retrain (study) - we have to find out how Adult Education can help.

General development of adult education

The school system is the usual way of gathering of knowledge. It is unambiguously set by legislation, has its clear managing structures, competencies, organisation, forms, curricula, resources of financing. Education acquired in the school system is recognised by the state and generally valid in the whole SR.

The non-school educational system provides mainly supplementary types and forms of education to the school system. Adult education is provided by school and non-school, by state and private institutions. For more exact description we are including some definitions of AE.

In Slovakia adult education is also considered as a part of life-long education. According to so-called competency law the Ministry of Education of SR is responsible for life-long education. The Act on Further Education is defining its subject (without age restriction) as following:

- continuous development of personality (re-education, re-socialisation),
- adaptation to changing social and cultural conditions,
- improvement in achievement of social roles, possibly training for new roles (through retraining),

- creation of conditions for achievement of these roles,
- general development of culture and erudition, knowledge.

Development of adult education in the SR can be generally characterised as lacking a coherent plan. Establishment of new educational institutions is not limited by special regulations (according to trade law it is so called "unbounded" activity). Adult education realised in various fields (e.g. industry, agriculture, etc.) is guided by various regulations. Development of adult education in the SR is affected unfavourably by the fact that a state structure of adult education has not been created, yet.

After the political changes in 1989 a new conception of the development of adult education has not been elaborated in Slovakia up to now, although some conceptual programmes of development of the educational system in SR, which consisted also of parts dealing with adult education, respectively, with life-long education, were submitted to public discussion (e. g. programme "Konštantín", 1994).

According to the above mentioned definitions and conceptions a basic mission of adult education should be characterised as creation and provision of conditions for the personal development of citizens and their life-long education in the field of acquisition of professional competencies, cultural education and education satisfying their personal interests. At present adult education which is realised at present is aimed at further professional education and training (mainly retraining, but also education in enterprises). The non-representative survey carried out by the Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education shows that half of the students are in this field and together with retraining it is covering more than three quarters.

Types and institutions of adult education in Slovakia

Adult education can be structured according to the following types:

- second chance school education (substitute school education)
- continuous professional education of adults
- professional (retraining) education
- socio-cultural education of adults
- civic education of adults.

Institutions dealing with adult education in the SR may be specified as four basic groups:

- primary, secondary vocational and grammar schools, universities which are financed by the Ministry of Education,
- educational institutions of central authorities of the state administration and educational institutions of branches, departments and enterprises,
- regional and municipal cultural centres,
- educational institutions, organisations and professional unions as chambers, associations, enterprising unions, educational institutions of corporations, civic and



interest associations, trade unions, church and religion societies, cultural and educational institutions, educational institutions of individual persons and legal entities.

Many non-state educational institutions are active in adult education.

Professionals in adult education

At present two groups of workers are active in adult education:

1. Conceptual and organisational workers aiming at:
 - conceptual questions of the development of adult education in direct link to problems of the employers' organisation and the operational management of adult education,
 - planning, preparation, organisation and evaluation of educational activities, choice of lecturers and collaboration with them.
2. Teachers (educators) of adult education, lecturers, tutors, consultants, trainers, instructors, patrons, internal and external professionals in given specialisation.



Professionals for adult education in Slovakia are prepared and trained only at the Department of Andragogics of the Philosophical Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava and at the Department of Adult Education of Prešov University in Prešov in the study field Andragogics and Adult Education, namely in specialisation aimed at professional education and cultural work.

Lecturers in further education are predominantly teachers of secondary schools and university teachers who first of all are active in state, respectively non-state schools in the frame of their basic activity.

Apart from teachers, many professionals in adult education have professional qualification, but in many cases they have no educational training.

Systematic preparation of teachers for adults does not exist in Slovakia at present and is not officially required. The only legislative-based requirement is that educational institutions applying for accreditation are required to submit documentation about the professional competence of teachers for educational activity including photocopies of documents about their professional qualification with short characteristics of professional and educational activity.

Management and co-ordination of adult education

From the point of view of the state managing competencies for adult education belong to the Ministry of Education of the SR (ME SR) which has to elaborate and submit the conception of educational activity in this area and to prepare legislation. The task of the ME SR is also to monitor activities of educational institutions and

provide information, analyse the interest of the market in awarding accreditation, initiate priorities and quality control of the provided educational services.

Retraining of unemployed comes under the common jurisdiction and competence of the Ministry of Work, Social Affairs and Family and the Ministry of Interior Affairs. Retraining of unemployed is conducted according to the Act of the National Council. Socio-cultural education is in the competence of the Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Interior - the regional authorities. 35 regional cultural centres were active in 1995 realising courses of various orientations.



Information system

A public information system about opportunities in adult education has not been created so far. A list of educational activity offers which will enable people interested to choose their educational activity is not available. Information is provided only by the educational institutions themselves in the frame and scope of their competence, with the exception of second chance school education which substitutes school education and is provided in school institutions as part-time study (secondary schools, universities).

An information system about the number of institutions acting in adult education, the number of courses and their participants does not exist. Statistical information about realised adult education began to be collected in 1997. The Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education is gathering data and evaluating them for the ME SR. From the existing number of educational institutions only very few submitted filled in statistical returns.

Accreditation and quality control

All educational institutions fulfilling the following conditions may apply for accreditation: subject of their activity includes educational activities, submission of educational projects, submission of documents concerning availability of teachers, good quality of material and technical conditions. The issued letter of accreditation is valid for a limited time period. Institutions providing education linked with a special legislation do not require accreditation (e.g. the Fire Brigade).

Planned legislation

The Act on Further Education will be amended, preparatory works are expected to be finished in 2000. The amendment should contain the broadening of the accreditation process for educational institutions provide stronger and more concrete financing provisions for further education and the establishment of a professional chamber of workers in adult education.

Amending to the Act on Higher education (the only act directly regulating education at Universities) is expected in 2001/2002.

In connection with the development of distance education in the SR a proposal of decree from the Ministry of Education on distance education will start its preparation. It should solve the position of distance education in the educational system, recognition of certificates and diplomas and the financing of its implementation.

In the preparation of all legal regulations professional groups created at the ME SR will work, proposals of the Acts will be submitted also to public discussion.

Problems and conclusions

Since the absence of a complete state system, the development and delivery of adult education in the SR is rather non-organised and at random. Educational institutions try to respond to requirements of the market. Regulations are not clearly defined. AE should be understood as a priority role of the state aimed at developing human resources.

Adult education in Slovakia is aimed very practically at professional education. Further professional education has 3 levels concerning its role, its conditions and requirements for provision:

- a) on the national level it is the condition for the adaptation and renewal of the workforce, among others in a new demographical context, thus decreasing the number of persons re-entering the labour market;
- b) on the level of firms, enterprises further professional education is understood as non-profit investment in human resources in order to adapt to changes in products, technologies and organisations and to increase the value of product and services;
- c) on the level of the individual person further professional education facilitates significantly professional mobility and promotion. An individual has to be prepared for continual improvement of his qualification to be able to adapt to changing conditions.

Unemployment of people without work experiences (young graduates of schools) is relatively high - 21,4%. Employers should be stimulated by the government (state) to give opportunity to young school-graduates to gain their first work experience. The employment of unemployed citizens should be stimulated by active employment policy of the government (state), by creating new opportunities, re-training programmes for unemployed according to the requirements of the labour market and by close co-operation with labour offices.

Accumulated problems in the system of adult education need an elaboration of nationally valid occupational and educational standards. Work in this area began and it will take some years till it will be completely elaborated (standards of occupations are within the competence of the Ministry of Work, Social Affairs and Family together with the Ministry of Economy and other branches, departments) and also implemented in practice in education (standards of education are within the competence of Ministry of Education in collaboration with Ministry of Work, Social Affairs and Family and other ministries).

The quality of education depends on the quality of the lecturers. Accreditation in further education requires submission of documents of professional competence and short a characteristics of the lecturers' activities.





The number of students is small. Introducing new forms of education (e.g. distance education, computer networks aided education, "virtual" university, etc.) can increase the number of students and provide more study opportunities for citizens.

Institutions of Adult Education and their activities

CITY UNIVERSITY BRATISLAVA

The City University in Bratislava is a non-state institution, established in 1990 with the support of the government of the Slovak Republic. Instructional materials, ways of teaching and the assessment of the achieved study results were taken over from The Open University in Great Britain. It offers courses, professional certificates and the diploma in management from The Open Business School and the course in Environment. The courses can be attended either in English or in Slovak.

TRANSFER SLOVAKIA

Based on know-how of the Swiss educational donation Transfer. The private institution TRANSFER SLOVAKIA provides education and training in the field of management, marketing and selected postgraduate studies for engineers.

ACADEMIA ISTROPOLITANA NOVA (AINova)

Was established in October 1996 in Bratislava as a counterpart of the Academia Istropolitana. It is providing post-graduate education in the Professional Programme in Applied Economics, Architectural Conservation Studies, Environmental Policy, European Studies and Professional Communication and English Programmes. The language of instruction is English.

AKADÉMIA VZDELÁVANIA

Is the oldest and biggest institution providing adult education in the Slovak Republic. It is associated with 38 affiliations. Language, professional and hobby courses attract 60 000 students yearly.

ASSOCIATION OF ADULT EDUCATION

Comprising educational and staff enterprise training organisations. It is professionally orientated and took part in legislative work too. The Association is publishing its newspaper ("Vzdelávanie dospelých") bimonthly.

The Council for distance education based on the group of experts on the platform of the Ministry of Education was renamed at the end of 1994 to Council of the Ministry of education for distance education. It is an advisory body of the Minister of education of the SR. The council is responsible for the conception of distance education.

OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SLOVAKIA

The Open University of Slovakia was established by the Ministry of Education and Science of Slovak Republic. A project team has been established in 1992 at the Institute of Information and Prognoses of Schools, Youth and Physical Education in Bratislava on the basis of the agreement between the Ministry and the Academy of Education. It is not in operation at the moment.

Activities directly related to NCDE and PHARE

The **National Centre of Distance Education** (NCDE) at the Slovak University of Technology was established as a Contact Point within the PHARE programme and at the same time as an information providing, co-ordinating and managing centre for distance education (DE) in Slovakia. NCDE was established in December 1994 by the Rector of the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava (SUT). NCDE received the status of an independent body.

NCDE is the National Contact Point in the international PHARE project "Multi-country Co-operation in Distance Education". Parts of the pilot project are national sub-projects. NCDE is the executive contractor and manager of the project responsible for meeting its goals. The aim of NCDE is to organise a network of institutes providing distance education, fulfilling organisational, management and information tasks in co-operation with the Council of distance education



In September 1996 the **Slovak Network of Distance Education** (hereafter called SNDE) was created as a community of organisations for support and provision of distance and life-long education in the Slovak Republic. The SNDE consists of the National Centre of Distance Education, 5 Local Centres of Distance Education (LCDE) in Košice, Zvolen, Nitra, Bratislava and Zilina, located at universities. The methodological centre of DE was established by the City University Bratislava. The Slovak Network of Distance Education provides a flexible access to the university and other accredited education institutions for everybody who is interested. Within the network local centres are providing various sorts of courses based on local expertise from which 9 were developed within the Phare project.

The NCDE as a contact point directs, co-ordinates the work of the centres within the above mentioned Phare project. It directs the activity of the Local Centres established by the Ministry of Education according to accepted recommendations of the Council of the Minister of Education for Distance Education. The NCDE expertly guides the centres, which are developing independently.

The Local Centres are independent joint institutions of the universities and their main responsibility is to broaden services offered by the university in the field of life-long education using mainly distance education methods but so called classical elements of education and development of tailored programmes or courses are not eliminated.

The SNDE ensures mainly mutual exchange of information on courses and education programmes among the centres, support in development, creation and distribution of study materials, it mediates courses and education programmes for the public, provides advisory service in the education area, monitors the quality of study materials and education processes, monitors the education process within the SNDE and of course the contact with similar international education institutions. The responsibility of local centres is also the co-ordination of activities of individual entities of distance education in the fields of their influence.

Phare project

The European Union has supported the development of distance education in all associated countries in Central and Eastern Europe by financing of the project "Multi-country Co-ordination in Distance Education, through the Phare programme.



The Phare project in which besides Slovakia 10 other Central and Eastern European countries are participating, became a factor/ means of overcoming some obstacles in providing this type of education.

Tasks:

- Technical procurement of NCDE and local centres
- To open a nation-wide dialogue about the creation of a distance education system
- Preparation and implementation of proposals of internal rules and legislation
- Analysis of needs and possibilities of DE in Slovakia, creation of organisations and network, training of management
- Preparation of pilot courses for distance education

After the end of the pilot project the Phare project continued under the name 'Follow-up-Phare'-Programme. The European Union developed 40 European educational courses ('Development of Distance Education Course Modules') in 'Phare countries'.

Follow-up project Phare

More than 10 seminars and workshops devoted to distance education methodology, management, tutoring, marketing, writing skills were organised on an international, national and local level. The special week of distance education in Slovakia consisted of an international seminar. Days of open doors in Local Centres of Distance Education took place in October 1996. "Follow-up-Phare" spread useful information for the academic community and also promoted educational forms of distance and flexible learning among the public.

Conclusion

The Phare project "Multi Country Co-operation in Distance Education" helped to establish dual mode institutions and their network in Slovakia which intends and is able to transform the old part-time university study system into new modern open and flexible one. Group of experts gathered by local centres from predominantly technically oriented universities provide a promising source for the development of courses. From nine new courses prepared within the Phare pilot project three started in autumn 1996 and more than 250 students have enrolled up to now. To fulfil the settled objectives complete graduation programmes are needed. Transfer, adaptation and creation of courses with the preferable orientation on higher education is the greatest challenge for the network. Through the Follow-up Phare project, international co-operation and the financial and legislative support of the Slovak state we suppose that in a few years the number of distance learners could rise to thousands.

List of used abbreviations:

ME SR	Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
NC SR	National Council of the SR (Slovak Parliament)
NCDE	National Council of Distance Education
UE	University of Economics

Wojciech Gilewski, Roman Nagorski (ed.)

**Modern History of Distance Education
at Warsaw University of Technology (WUT)**

June 1999

History - 1993

- The concept of the Polish Ministry of Education to create the Open University in Poland as a separate unit based on the staff of existing universities
- Training seminar in Radziejowice with lectures from UK, Germany, Norway
- Changes in the Ministry - death of the concept of creating the Open University in Poland

History - 1994

- What to do ? No general concept for Poland
- Solution: the method of small steps
- Contacts with the OUs in Europe
- TESSA Projects in ODL: TESSA-22 Courses of Management for Disabled, TESSA-20 Multimedia English Courses
- Training in UK: DL Methodology
- ODL in the Centre for Continuing Education

History - 1995

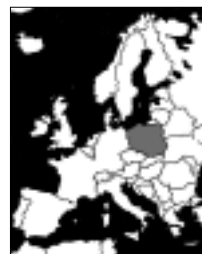
- TESSA Projects - cont.
- Training in UK: Tutoring at a Distance
- Training in UK: Multimedia in ODL
- Contacts with ODL providers in Europe and USA - mainly at university level
- 3 DL courses of management finished
- 3 Multimedia English Language courses nearly finished

History - 1996

- TESSA Projects - cont. and finished
- Delivery of DL courses
- New promising contact: The Open University, Faculty of Technology and Knowledge Media Inst., Milton Key., UK
- TEMPUS Project CEPROADS - the role: management, monitoring, quality control, evaluation and ODL courses

History - 1997

- TEMPUS Project CEPROADS cont.
- Cooperation with National Centre for DE in Poland - educational consultancy in





- preparation of 20 DL books
- Prep. of a Guidebook of Learning at Home
- Preparation of DL course in CEPROADS
- PHARE DESC at WUT accepted
- Continuing Education Centre at WUT closed

History - 1998

- ODL moved to the Faculty of Civil Engineering
- TEMPUS Project CEPROADS cont.
- Delivery of DL course for road administration
- Co operation with National Centre for DE - cont.
- PHARE Project for DESC started
- Creation of Distance Education Study Centre at Warsaw University of Technology

History - 1999

- Extension of DESC Project to September
- Equipment for DESC received
- University level DL material produced
- HTML based DL materials produced
- What to do next ? No support at national level. Solution: the method of small steps
- Support at the Faculty of Civil Engineering

Future - 1999 - 2000

- Cooperation with Polish and EU universities - SOCRATES and LEONARDO Programme
- Support at the Faculty of Civil Engineering - preparation and delivery of ODL
- Promising contacts with educational unit of IBM Poland
- Agreement with the University of Michigan for studying at a distance for Polish students

Warsaw University of Technology (WUT)/ Distance Education Study Centre

Popularity of the extra mural model of secondary level school is growing in Poland. At the moment we can observe a similar trend for secondary level schools and for universities - people have to work and learn at the same time, so they prefer to study as extramural students.

Continuing education centres are working all day and all evening. Extramural lectures are organized from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. from Monday to Friday and all day on Saturday and Sunday.

There is one central office in Warsaw and a working network of 57 centres. The main providers for continuing education are outsourced institutions related to public institutions.

The most popular option is "general". Technical and vocational schools are working

all over Poland, but the most popular branches depend on the area of the country. There is a trend towards extra mural learning in higher education, concerning both the development in the technical and vocational field and a general rise in the direction of more flexible study modes.

Learning in Poland is formally free (primary, secondary and higher education), but not for extramural studies. In fact we provide extramural studies within the university with some extra money for the university. From the point of view of students - they have to pay. The cost of extramural studies in public universities is much smaller than in private schools and universities.

The extra mural studies are mainly delivered in a combination of traditional technologies and new technologies.

Teachers and professors understand that new forms of learning are absolutely necessary to modernise our system of learning and make it comparable with EU models. And we remember that we are at the doorstep to the EU.



LEARNING NEEDS OF ADULTS IN POLAND

Polish Association for Continuing Engineering Education "EDUSTIM"

1. Situation in Adult Education in Poland

1.1. Educational system and its reform

Since 1989, together with the beginning of building a new market economy and a democratic political system in Poland, the reform of educational system was started. This reform is a process which has lasted since 1990 and should last longer because of the necessity of change in all aspects of education: organisation of the system, new curricula and programmes of education, teaching and learning methodology.

The aim of these changes is straightforward: adaptation of the educational system to the needs of the transforming economy, labour market and the new social situation in the Polish society, as well as in its particular groups. However, the practical realisation of the formulated objectives is not so easy, due to the following factors: the lack of financial means in the state budget, difficult situation of industry and, above all, the inertia of structures and the mentality of the teaching and administrative staff in the educational sector. This results in the fact that the reform is not satisfactory with respect to the needs. However one factor is very positive because it stimulates further changes - it is the significant growth of interest in education displayed by people: the young people want to have good education, possibly of higher level, and the adult people wish to improve their professional qualifications. That is the reason why a real educational and training market emerged with many new schools and training centres offering different kinds of educational programmes and training courses. Moreover, people and companies are ready to pay for services of this type. However, the weakness of the educational system, especially the school system, constitutes a severe barrier, that should be overcome. That is why many initiatives and results of development projects, including those financed from the PHARE Fund and other assistance programmes of the Western countries and Japan, cannot find a good environment for a significant improvement of this situation.

For those reasons a new initiative of the government was undertaken in 1998 in order



to reform the Polish educational system.

The organisation and functioning of the educational system, according to its latest programme of modernisation which is due to start in 1999, will be based on two parliamentary acts:

- the act on the educational system - concerning the education from the pre-school to the post-secondary level,
- the act on the higher education - concerning the education on higher level and on several so-called executive acts issued by the government.

The whole education system is composed of two segments:

- education in school forms, and
- education in out-of-school forms.

The first one comprises:

- 1) pre-school (one year) education - for children at the age of 6 years (not obligatory);
- 2) general education (obligatory):
 - a) primary (6 years) education - in primary schools,
 - b) post-primary (3 years) education - in 'gymnasium' type schools;
- 3) secondary education - at choice:
 - a) vocational (2 years) education - in vocational schools,
 - b) lyceum (3 years) education - in generally or vocationally profiled 'lyceum' type schools,
 - c) complementary lyceum (2 years) education - in 'complementary lyceum' type schools (for alumni of vocational schools, who would like to complete their education at the full secondary level);
- 4) post-secondary (1-2 years) vocational education - in 'post-lyceum' type schools.

At the end of the school education (at each level, except for the pre-school one) some kind of a final examination is foreseen. After the 'lyceum' type school the so-called 'Matura' or an A level examination will permit graduates to continue their education at the higher level.

This school system is to be completed by special type schools, which will permit the disabled people to receive education (general and/or vocational).

The higher education comprises:

- 1) first degree (3-4 years) education of:
 - a) a vocational type, or
 - b) an academic type(the graduates will receive a 'licence' or an 'engineer' diploma);
- 2) second degree (1-2 years) education of 'master' type;
- 3) uniform (5-6 years) education of 'master' type;
- 4) third degree (3-4 years) education - doctoral studies.

The out-of-school forms of education (and training) comprise:

- 1) post-diploma studies (for people who have completed their higher education),
- 2) various types of courses (of a short, medium and long duration) - both courses on

- general knowledge and training courses on vocational qualifications,
- 3) seminars and conferences (of educational character)
- 4) practical works and practical placements,
- 5) self-study courses,
- 6) popular forms of education (TV and radio broadcasts, open lectures, educational publications etc.).

The out-of-school forms can be carried out both by schools and other educational centres, public and non-public (private, intra-company, belonging to non-governmental organisations): continuing education centres, centres for practical preparation, training centres, professional development centres etc.

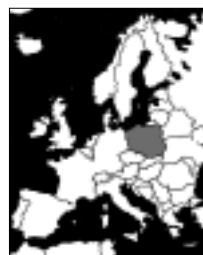
The basic and secondary education for young people (initial students) in schools is provided in the stationary mode. But this type of education for adult students as well as the higher level education (both for young and adult students) can be delivered in other modes and, of course, in out-of-school forms as well.

1.2. Adult education and its reform

After the Second World War, as a result of the extermination of a considerable part of the Polish nation, especially the intelligentsia, and because of the necessity of reconstruction of the enormously destroyed country, as well as a necessity for the industry development, there was a great need to educate a significant part of the Polish society, including the liquidation of illiteracy. For this reason the adult education at all levels was developed, in great part in order to complete the education interrupted by the war. Next, in relation to the so-called social promotion, a great percentage of adults completed the secondary level education (less than higher education). This kind of further education lasted to a significant extent until the end of the years 1970.

At present (because of the increasing significance of higher education and 'modern' qualifications) and especially in the future (according to the new principles of vocational education), the further education of adults aiming at upgrading their formal education, will be significant at the post-secondary and higher levels. But according to the new principles of the reformed educational system there is no need to create special schools for adults because the final results, for both young and adult people, will be the most important ones for the examination and qualification commission. Also, the modes of education will be of second order of significance because the result, and not the course of education will be decisive (the mode of education may be important, for young or adult men, from the accessibility point of view)

Apart from school education for adults, different kinds of out-of-school forms have existed and still exist in Poland. In the 1960 and 1970 they were quite well developed. Enterprises had a duty to organise training actions or to delegate their staff to training courses or so called training conferences, designed to keep people informed on the latest news in the subject areas of their interest. Formal training courses were obligatory for certain professions and necessary to get promotion (e.g. teachers, lawyers, doctors) or even for all employed people (e.g. training on safety of labour). They were offered mainly by the public (state) centres for professional development and by pro-





professional associations. In universities, the so-called 'post-diploma studies' (existing until now) were developed. Many popular forms of education were organised, mainly lectures open to the public, offered by such national organisations as the network of 'country universities' acting in the country, the Popular Knowledge Society working in towns. Also, scientific institutions (e.g. Polish Academy of Sciences), scientific societies and professional associations (e.g. scientific-technical associations of engineers and technicians) offered open popular lectures on interesting scientific or technical topics.

In the Eighties the out-of-school activities were gradually decreasing, even taking on a degenerate form. The post-diploma studies were organised to get additional jobs for academic teachers and not to give participants the knowledge they really needed. In enterprises, the so-called 'course-men' appeared, i.e. people whose task was to participate in training courses (to improve the statistics). The so-called course-conferences were organised only for tourist, social or entertainment reasons. Popular open forms of education lost audience.

After 1989 an enormous need to have new qualifications necessary for the market economy appeared. By opening the economy to the technology transfer, new skills were necessary, especially in telecommunication and information technologies (Poland belongs to the best selling markets for computer technologies in the last years) as well as the knowledge of foreign languages, especially English. On the other hand, the declining Polish industry, new foreign companies and new Polish institutions looking for a staff with new necessary competencies caused a great movement on the labour market. It was necessary to gain new qualifications to receive a new job. In this way, a new real educational and training market was born in Poland. The number of students increased significantly: including extra-mural students paying for their education at secondary, post secondary and higher level education, as well as adult students participating in training courses,

At the beginning of the years 1990, individual people and foreign assistance funds (PHARE Fund, British Know-How Fund, Foundation 'France-Pologne' and others) were the main sources of financing the educational and training undertakings. Gradually, the privatised and restructured Polish enterprises, understanding the necessity of investment in human resources, the State creating funds for training its own clerks and services (police, fire-brigade and others) and retraining unemployed people, self-government authorities of new established local units of administration designating funds for training their own administrative staff became stronger, supporting the further continuing education development.

Many various kinds of schools and centres for continuing education and training were established and are still created. First private higher schools and centres appeared being the investments of both Polish and foreign private capital. Additionally, many newly created foundations as one of their statutory activities undertook training activities. The Ministry of National Education established a network of public continuing education centres. Also, the professional educational non-governmental organisations revised their approach to the educational activities and started to offer more market-oriented and more professionally organised continuing education enterprises.



Gradually, the universities began to deliver new and shorter vocational type studies and post-diploma studies - mainly adopting EU and US standards (e.g. B.Sc. type studies, French 'master type' studies, MBA studies) with modernised programmes and methodology as well as oriented to the real needs. They also began to profit from the experiences transferred from EU countries within the framework of TEMPUS and other PHARE programmes. Also, other type continuing education courses, including those in a distance education form (e.g. in the frame of TESSA Programme by the Warsaw University of Technology) began to be offered. In several universities, separate centres or offices for continuing (out-of-school) education were established, although the education, including continuing education, is still organised by faculties, institutes and departments (academic units in the university structure).

One can say that the continuing education in Poland during the last 8 years has been developing spontaneously - as a market answer to new and large needs. The State policy was relatively weak. The units coordinating the foreign assistance funds (PHARE and others) did not have the sufficient support from a clearly defined policy and a legal base. The parliamentary and governmental legal acts regulated the adult and continuing education only fragmentarily, without a clear and consistent vision or organisation of the educational system. On the other hand, one can understand the difficulties: it is not easy to regulate newly appearing phenomena and formulate a policy when the mentality barriers in traditional schools and institutions are predominant. The self-organisation of continuing education bodies in Poland is also relatively weak. The legal mechanism of financing their activities (the so-called state tasks provided by non-profit organisations) is new and insufficiently developed - the important reason for this is the lack of financial sources in the State budget (the existing funds are directed to social needs). Besides, the cooperation between educational and professional organisations is weak (it is easier for an association to cooperate with an international organisation than with a national one). All these factors explain that the development in continuing education, already significant as to its quantity, has at the same time serious weaknesses. The main factor is the quality of educational and training undertakings - there are very high quality and very low quality courses. This causes social and financial losses and a lack of orientation among people interested in participation in continuing education activities or paying participation fees. There is no infrastructure supporting providers and customers.

Formulated by the government in 1998, a long term policy concerning a reform of the educational system, already programmed and, in a great part, constituted legally and starting to function in a new organisational structure in 1999, offers a new, very important frame for further development of Polish continuing education (school and out-of-school education of adults). The developing Polish economy should support this process significantly.

Firstly, general principles of the new educational system make the initial and further (adult) school education equal with respect to pedagogical requirements, rules of providing and educational results to be achieved at the moment of finishing the school (on every level) - verified in a form of final examination by an independent commission. In particular, it means that the same schools can educate both young and adult people at the post-secondary and higher level. The difference will consist in the way



of financing the education of young and adult people. Up to a certain age, depending on the level of education, the education of young people will be financed in general by the State budget. Besides, further education of some groups of adults can also be (individually) financed from special funds or by companies employing them.

Secondly, the system makes the modes of education and training equal (the result, verified by an examination or a qualification commission, is important, not the way of its achievement). This is a good mechanism for the development of different kinds of open, flexible and distance education and training, because schools and continuing education centres will be interested in offering such products which will be easily accessible for large groups of the society (to increase their incomes) and of good quality (supervised by "pedagogical state administration" and / or by a quality control system).

The principles of the new system favour in a natural way an extension of the education period, because the achievement of successive vocational qualifications (to be confirmed by independent commissions for vocational qualifications) and the obtaining of a professional title (certificate) will practically be possible during the whole vocational life. It is also important for the adaptation of an individual to the changing situation on the labour market. People today do not learn something interesting, they learn strictly for professional needs. A very important question to be solved in the near future is the creation of good mechanisms of financing further education, including those in the regions and for social groups needing support, especially motivating local authorities and the enterprises, whose role in vocational development of adult people will grow significantly.

Finally, the new system clearly transfers the point of gravity in the educational process from teaching to learning. This is visible, among others, in the construction of the so-called core curricula and programmes and in the methodology of their realisation. Besides, the teacher's role should change. The teaching staff should receive new pedagogical qualifications (playing roles of tutors, mentors and advisers, as well as designers of particular educational programmes. For this aim, a system of professional development of teachers is intended, linked with formal degrees of a teacher's career. The problem needing solution is the establishment of good mechanisms and financing sources for the system, as well as an infrastructure able to put into practice the programmed tasks.

2. Learning needs. Open and flexible learning

2.1. Infrastructure for learning

The first fundamental problem concerning learning needs - one can say the first need concerning learning, especially OFL - is to establish a corresponding infrastructure for learning, including support for learners comprising a competent and sufficient educational staff as well as technical tools. One can even say that the technical means, although insufficient in some aspects, are of the second order of significance. The most important problem is to train teaching personnel to play the role of staff supporting learners - in all aspects connected with the learning process.



In Poland, the education of educators and training of trainers was and still is oriented to 'how to teach' not 'how to support and service learning'. Trainers are the teachers or experts from institutions or industry. The first have pedagogical competencies, the second are competent in their subjects. There is a real need to train competent experts to have training skills. But the interest in it is not too great (the market selects talented experts and competent teachers - that's all).

During last years, some initiatives and projects concerning staff development have been established at universities, schools and continuing education centres. Also, some products designed for learners (self-learners, participants of distance learning courses) have been prepared. Thanks to the PHARE programmes (e.g. TESSA, Phare Multi-Country Distance Education Development, TEMPUS) and other foreign assistance funds several projects were carried-out (and are still in realisation). Profiting from good standards and practice of EU and other countries and improving technical equipment, several products have been prepared and implemented, such as printed, video and electronic educational or training materials (also guides for learners) and distance learning courses organised according to the state of the art in this field. During the realisation of these projects a staff competent in all aspects connected with open, flexible and distance learning was trained. Several distance education centres were established (public and private) - in the frame of above projects or independently, as an implementation of foreign centres of such a type in Poland. There is a National Centre of Distance Education, but it is a pity that its role and activity in the area of OFL and DL are limited - mainly because of the lack - up to this point - of a clear vision of the Ministry of National Education, its founding and supervising institution. It is worth underlining that some results of the above mentioned initiatives may be interesting for foreign (including EU) centres or institutions (e.g. course on management for handicapped people, a flexible course on computer architecture: they are accessible on Internet and can be installed on a PC as well as in a printed form - from a computer platform).

The examples quoted above are a good 'initial capital', which should be developed and disseminated. However, for this purpose the financial support of the State, as well as the political and moral one, is needed. At a conference held in Warsaw in autumn of 1998, organised by the National Socrates Coordinating Office, the most frequent opinions expressed during presentations and discussion by the Polish group representing centres for activities in the field of OFL and DL, concerned the mentality barriers and lack of understanding from the side of the governing spheres at each level. Through the exchange of knowledge and good practice from EU countries (as within the REREAL project) the development of this process can be strengthened.

As far as the technical infrastructure for OFL is concerned, it can be said in general that it is still unsatisfactory, but it seems sufficient for the development of OFL. Many educational and training centres, public and private, universities and non-universities, have a 'very good equipment for preparing and producing materials or courses in all technical forms. Computers are very popular, although not yet in small cities and villages. Almost all universities have good computer and Internet networks, a great number of schools as well as many public institutions and big companies have access to Internet.



The universities have adopted EU and US standards but unfortunately they apply these standards only during the studies. The curricula and methodology consists mainly of 'cutting existing longer programmes' and 'applying the existing methods'. But some new higher schools (mostly private and international initiatives) try to create something new. Inertia of university authorities and staff does not allow the stimulation of the process of quality transformation. Initiatives in older universities do not constitute the respective 'critical mass' yet. The reformed system of education introduces new positive mechanisms and a legal basis. But only the market, including labour and educational market, can cause the required changes - in a long term perspective.

The real problem, however, is the possibility of contacts with tutors and mentors - direct and 'face-to-face' or using remote-controlled tools. The reform of the educational system assumes that schools should form a network, as local centres for OFL. But that demands some time and a different kind of support (the technological progress is faster than the mental and pedagogical ones).

Good guides on 'how to learn' can also be included in the infrastructure needed for learners. The Polish society, because of weaknesses of the educational system is, in general, accustomed to learning. The principles of the new reformed system assume that, during the school education young people will be taught how to learn, i.e. one of the core skills to be achieved during the general education by each young men should be the skill of learning through the whole life (lifelong learning). But this requires a lot of time. In the next years, the most important tasks for educational institutions will be the elaboration of a set of guidelines facilitating learning - for different social groups according to their specificity, at a proper level and in various forms (printed, electronic etc.). A good example of such a guide for distance learning was elaborated at Warsaw University of Technology (and is included in the course textbooks delivered by WUT and National Distance Education Centre).

2.2. Needs of OFL

In general, one can probably enumerate the same target groups of people in all European countries for whom OFL is particularly necessary or can facilitate their educational efforts. Taking into account the situation in Poland, we can mention the following groups:

Handicapped people
People staying at home
People in rural areas
Working people

List of used abbreviations:

MBA	Masters and Bachelor of Arts
WUT	Warsaw University of Technology
TESSA	
TEMPUS CEPROADS	EU-projects
PHARE DESC	

Pirjo Keinänen

ADULT EDUCATION IN FINLAND

Premises of education policy

The premise of Finnish educational philosophy has been to cater for the competence and education of the entire population. The government determines the priorities and definitions of the development policy in the Development Plan for Educating and University Research. The new plan covers the period 1999-2004.

One of the tasks of education and training is to provide tools to manage changes in society and to consolidate cohesion. Central factors of change include the progress of globalisation, the trend in the population's age structure, changes in working life and structural unemployment, as well as the effects of information and communication technologies.

A high standard of education, reinforcing the status of adult education and training, frequent and diverse contacts with working life and a policy of competencies based on the principle of lifelong learning are ways of preparing for the challenges that the new millennium will bring.

Each age group is provided with a general 9-year basic education. The opportunity to move up to general or vocational education after basic education in comprehensive school can be provided for the whole age group. Tertiary-level studies are available for 60-65 % of the age group in polytechnics or universities.

Administration and funding

The overall responsibility for education policy and self motivated adult education and training rests with the Ministry of Education and the National Board of Education, an expert and development office subordinate to the Ministry. The Education and Culture Departments of the Provincial State Offices are the regional expert authorities in the administrative field of the Ministry of Education. The municipalities and the federation of municipalities play a significant role in providing and financing education and training. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have a strong position especially in the sectors of liberal adult education and counselling. Important co-operation partners also include teacher, student and labour market organisations.

The Department of Education and Science Policy within the Ministry of Education consists of six divisions: the General Education Division, the Vocational Education Division, the Polytechnic Division, the University Division, the Science Division and the Division for Adult Education and training. The responsibilities of the Division for Adult Education and Training primarily cover the tasks concerning adult education and training (general, vocational, polytechnics universities, liberal adult education and





the counselling sector) and the promotion of lifelong learning within the domain of the Ministry of education. Within the National Board of education, tasks concerning adult education and training are discharged by its Adult Education Division. The Adult Education Council in turn is an expert body within the Ministry of Education, set up by the Government for a three-year period.

The administrative field of the Ministry of Education accounts for about 14 % of the State budget (3.8 % of Finland's Gross Domestic Product - GDP), equivalent to 4,400 million Euro. In addition, the local (municipal) authorities, the private sector and citizens provide considerable funding for education, science and culture. Of the Ministry of Education's budgetary estimates of expenditure about 14 % is channelled into adult education and training, totalling almost about 580 million Euro.

Development of adult education and the training system

The Finnish system of adult education and training is the result of prolonged historical development. During a period of more than a hundred years, various forms of educational institutions have emerged to fulfil the educational needs of that time. Every institution form had its own goals, operating methods and target groups. However, the systematic development of adult education and training only started in the 1970's in accordance with the definitions outlined by the Adult Education Committee. In 1978, the Government issued a Decision-in-Principle concerning the planning and development of adult education and training. This was based on the principle of continuing education, which entailed the creation of a flexible education and training system to provide all citizens with the opportunity to enrich all their life stages through studies. This was followed by extensive development work in different sectors, which in turn led to legislative and other reforms and a considerable expansion of adult education and training.

Until the 1980's, adult education and training were mainly associated with liberal adult education institutions. Since then, measures have been specifically directed at expanding the provision of certificate-oriented education and supplementary training for adults. Consequently, the relative proportion of liberal adult education has diminished, although, in terms of quantity, it still reaches a multitude of citizens. However, in terms of educational provision, certificate-oriented adult education is more extensive since it lasts longer. In the 1990's, adult education at universities has in turn increased considerably with the expansion of open university instruction in particular. Moreover, the most recent form of education, the polytechnic system, also includes adult education and training and their provision has increased with the permanent establishment of the polytechnic system. When the unemployment rate reached a high in the early 1990's, adult employment training (labour market training) was also expanded.

All the education and training intended for young people is also provided for adults, ranging from comprehensive school studies to university, but due to its nature some of the educational provision is intended for adults only. Some educational institutions concentrate exclusively on adult education and training whereas for others adult edu-

cation and training form only a part of their activities. In some cases, adults may also participate in education intended for young people. Adult education and training are also provided in the form of in-service-training in companies. The proportion of commercial training organisations is small.

Educational content and description of the institutions

Basic education and general upper secondary education for adults

Adults may complete the syllabus of basic education (comprehensive school) or upper secondary school and participate in the upper secondary school and matriculation examination primarily at upper secondary schools for adults and in adult study programmes at ordinary upper secondary schools. There are comprehensive school programmes in some 30 folk high schools and six folk high schools have an upper secondary school programme.

Initial vocational education and training for adults

Adults may study together with young people at different types of vocational institutions. Instruction is often arranged in the form of adult study programmes or multi-form study. Vocational adult education centres and national specialised institutions are institutions specialised in adult education and training. Furthermore, some folk high schools also provide vocational education.

Additional vocational training

Additional vocational training is self-motivated training independent of the employer, aiming at enhancing vocational competence. The training can be provided by all educational institutions under public supervision. The majority of additional training is provided by vocational adult education centres, which are mostly municipal adult education institutions.

Polytechnic education

In the 1990's, about 30 polytechnics have been established in Finland. More than a fifth of the educational provision leading to polytechnic degrees is directed to adults. The majority of students are people with post-secondary qualifications or other vocational qualifications, who are upgrading their studies into polytechnic degrees. All polytechnics provide open polytechnic instruction.

Universities

All 20 universities in the country also provide study opportunities for adults. All universities have a continuing education centre, organising continuing education of varying forms and lengths.

The field that has expanded most rapidly is open university instruction. It provides all citizens with an opportunity, independent of educational background, to complete academic study modules. There is no specific Open University in Finland, but uni-





versities provide the education in a dispersed manner in co-operation with various adult education institutions. In recent years, study via information networks has particularly increased. Open university methods are used at the university of the Third Age, intended for senior citizens.

Liberal Adult Education

Liberal adult education means the network of educational institutions that has emerged as the result of prolonged historical development, as well as their instruction. A common feature of these activities is that their objectives and contents are not set from outside or from up high, but they are decided by the organisations behind the institutions. These sponsor organisations usually include various associations and foundations, but yet another possible form of ownership is the limited company. The sponsor organisations may represent different ideological or religious views or base their operations on local and regional educational and cultural needs. Consequently, adult education centres, mainly owned by municipalities, are also considered as liberal adult education. Liberal adult education thus includes both activities based on different value systems and those that are neutral in this respect.

An essential feature is the voluntary nature of participation. In relation to the state authorities, a central factor is the licence to maintain an institution, which entails establishing whether the underlying educational and cultural needs are sufficient and whether the applicant has sufficient professional and economic resources for maintaining the institution. Once granted, the licence allows extensive autonomy and the freedom to operate, but also requires that the institution is independently responsible for identifying and developing its tasks. The licence involves the right to a state subsidy in accordance with the relevant legislation. Traditionally, folk high schools, adult education centres and study centres have been considered as liberal adult education institutions, but according to new legislation, physical education centres (sports institutes) and summer universities have also been brought under the same act. These institutions provide a diverse range of education in many different forms. In particular, they offer general, social and interested-orientated studies.

Folk high schools are nation-wide boarding schools. The majority of them are maintained by various associations and foundations (84 in all), six are municipal and one is owned by the Åland Region. Each school may emphasise its own value system, ideology or educational objectives. Of the schools, 34 are called Grundtvigian (independent), 43 have a Christian background, 11 are maintained by political movements, trade unions and NGOs and three concentrate on education for disabled people.

Folk High schools provide one-year study programmes and summer and weekend courses of different lengths. The most popular programmes are those concentrating on languages, the arts, social subjects and humanities. The range of course subjects is extensive. About three-quarters of the schools' overall activities are non-formal studies (i.e. non-certificate-orientated). The rest consists of certificate-orientated education provided in accordance with the relevant legislation. Some schools provide non-formal liberal education exclusively, whereas certificate-orientated education accounts for a considerable proportion in others. Folk high schools also provide plenty of open university instruction.

Adult education centres (or workers institutions) are mainly municipal adult education institutions. Adult education centres operate in all municipalities, and their activities have been dispersed into suburbs and villages. The emphasis of instruction is determined according to locality. The most popular subjects are languages, music, other arts subjects and crafts. Adult education centres also provide a lot of open university instruction. In addition they cater for a large part of basic art education intended for children and young people. Instruction is mainly arranged in the evenings. The most common operating method is a study group convening once or twice a week, although short-term intensive courses are becoming more common.

Study centres maintained by culture organisations are all private adult education institutions. Half of the sponsor organisations represent political parties and the trade union movement, while independent NGOs make up the other half.

Physical education centres (sports institutes) are national and regional boarding schools providing physical exercise, physical education and coaching.

Summer universities are maintained by regional associations and certain Regional Councils. Their activities focus on summer courses in more than 50 localities. Summer universities provide open university instruction, language courses and supplementary vocational training in particular.



Participation

According to the Adult Education Survey by Statistics Finland, about half of the people from 18 - 64 participated in various forms of adult education in 1995. Compared with 1990, the growth was 4 %. Participation among women was 53 % compared to 43 % among men. The difference has remained unchanged for the last 15 years. The participation rate was highest among people aged 30-54. However, the highest increase in participation in the 1990's occurred among those over 54. People with extensive educational background were the most active participants in adult education. On the average, studies in adult education and training took 8 days per year. The main fields were information technology, languages and studies in social and in behavioural sciences.

Development priorities in adult education

Central development targets are as follows:

- the Action Programme For Lifelong Learning
- effectiveness of adult education policy and the quality of adult education and training
- enforcing the new educational legislation and monitoring its effects
- educational needs stemming from changes in working life
- anticipatory and working life skills in educational institutions and companies
- the status, tasks and provision forms of self-motivated education and training
- further measures of the Information Strategy Programme



- the population's age structure and the National Programme for Ageing Workers
- social cohesion and prevention of social exclusion
- competencies of the teaching staff and supporting the change in job description

Programme for Ageing Workers and education and training for senior citizens

In 1997, the Government issued a principal decision known as the National Programme for Ageing Workers for 1998-2002. Its purpose is to support the competencies and mental and physical resources of the population aged over 45 in particular, so they do not retire until they are closer to the official retirement age. The implementation of this programme including several sections is the responsibility of the Ministries of Labour, Education and Social Affairs and Health as well as labour market organisations.

The Ministry of Education has promoted the objectives of the Programme for Ageing Workers. Research and pilot projects concerning teaching methods and forms of on-the-job training have been supported. Special attention has been paid to improving IT skills among the adult population.

Information society and adult education

A central objective of the Information Society programmes within the domain of the Ministry of Education is to guarantee the provision of basic IT skills for the adult and elderly population as well. In recent years, a considerable part of adult education and training has been dedicated to IT studies. Adult education institutes have developed teaching methods specifically suited for older population. In university studies of the Third Age, for example, information technology is one of the most popular subjects. The computer driving licence is a skills test developed for the needs of working life and the adult population.

Educational provisions that utilise information technology and open learning environments constitute an expanding field in adult education. Examples of developments include the virtual open university, distance upper secondary school, open polytechnic education, network applications of further and specialist vocational qualifications (OpinNet) and networks of liberal adult education and libraries. Teaching, scientific and cultural provision broadcast through radio and television will expand significantly in the next few years, as will plans concerning digital channels progress.

Lifelong learning

Education policy with emphasis on lifelong learning means paying attention to the following considerations:

- an extensive early childhood education system levelling out the differences in learning conditions
- the development of learning skills during the comprehensive school
- high level of education in the age group entering the labour market
- young people's seamless transition from education to working life
- the opportunities of adults with weak or obsolete initial education to raise its level or to bring it up to date



- the opportunities for adults to update and enhance their competencies and to improve their learning skills.

Their support will call for:

- financial support systems to secure subsistence during studies in different situations in life
- enhancing learning that occurs outside the public education system on a par with learning within the education system
- extensive and up-to-date information and counselling services for the education and support systems
- a system that guarantees the continuous updating of the teaching staff's professional competence.

In accordance with the policy definitions presented above, an Action Programme for Lifelong Learning has been prepared. The purpose is to proceed to concrete measures and experiments on the basis of this programme.

ADULT EDUCATION IN LAPLAND IN THE 1990'S

In the field of adult education especially vocational adult education has expanded its offerings in the 1990's. One reason for that has been the economic depression in the beginning of 1990's, which increased the unemployment rate. One way to help the situation was to expand the supply of education. Between 1992- 1997 the participation in adult education was growing considerably. About half of the adult population (18-24 years) is participating yearly in adult education.

Earlier the institutions were operating as separate organisations and the co-operation was insignificant. The change in ownership and funding system of vocational institutions has reduced a number of institutions to half of what they were in 1992.

The most important regional buyers of adult education are the Labour Office and the Provincial Government. Co-operation in buying between authorities is close.

There are too many people over 45 years without initial vocational education. Competence-based examinations are a new method to complete vocational education independent of educational background. General education is needed as well, especially to raise basic and learning skills of older generations. Too often general and vocational education are viewed separately, the authorities are buying only vocational education.

Adult education is using various methods and include the Internet more and more in the learning process, so guidance services have to be developed. A remarkable local guidance provider is the Labour Office, libraries are places to find information about education, but there are still many weaknesses in guidance services to be overcome.

Learning Lapland - an initiative for advancing lifelong learning in Lapland

The main problem in the province of Lapland is the decreasing number of people. Villages in remote areas are desolate, services have to be cut back. People move to growth centres, which are not always in Lapland. On the other hand, there are more and more high-tech enterprises in Lapland, the tourism sector is flourishing and so are the traditional sectors of Lapland - forest- and paper industry and metal industry have good future views.

When "the baby boom generations" are retiring, lack of work force will be a threat in Lapland, too. Especially high -tech enterprises will have problems to get work force.

It is a big challenge to introduce the information society strategy of the Ministry of Education to all levels of education uniformly. To develop education experiments and initiatives will be needed which test their applicability to information society. The effective dissemination of the results of projects needs time and resources.

The aims of the project are

- to raise the level of skills in the whole province of Lapland
- to ensure equal education services
- to diversify working and learning methods
- to develop new learning materials and study modules
- lifelong learning and continuing maintaining of the level of skills; the role of liberal education will be further emphasised as activator and co-ordinator
 - of networking and
 - of promoting different organisations to be learning places, also for elderly and people marginalized in working life.



Mikael Andersson (ed.)

SHORT HISTORY OF ADULT EDUCATION

During the major part of the 1900's adult education in different forms has been of great significance in the Swedish society. Till the end of the 1960's a few correspondence schools, (e.g. Hermods and NKI) were very active in this area and reached large numbers of adults students. In the mid 1960's Sweden was probably the country with the largest number of distance students in relation to its population.

At the end of the 60's the Swedish government decided to increase the accessibility to institutes for adult studies. Practically all forms of adult education should be cost free or at very low cost for the individual student. A special educational organisation of municipal adult education institutions (KOMVUX) was set up all over the country. At these institutions adults could receive formal education up till upper secondary level. The correspondence schools could not fully compete with these cost free institutions and their activities fell behind.

The question of Swedish distance education was discussed in a number of official investigations. The matter of founding a special university for distance education, like the Open University in Britain, was discussed. The government decided against this and the following system for distance education was created.

To cover the secondary level of the educational system two national institutes were created. One was placed in the north of Sweden, *Statens Skola för Vuxna i Härnösand, SSVH*, and one in the southern part of the country, *Statens Skola för Vuxna i Norrköping, SSVN*. The task of these schools was to develop courses and offer distance education.

On a tertiary level a highly decentralised system was built. This meant that the task to develop and offer distance education was given to institutions at the existing universities.

In 1978 a special company, the *Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company, UR*, was started within the Swedish family of public service broadcasters.

The decisions taken in the 1970's about distance education on a university level led to a small-scale education, normally with the maximum of 30 students in a course. Usually the courses were in the form of self-study with a complement of comprised lectures, usually during weekends. This situation was probably due to the small-scale organisation of distance education at Swedish universities.

A series of measures have been taken to develop distance education as a complement to traditional education at the universities. These measures can be described as three steps.

The first step was taken in the end of the 1980's when resources were concentrated to a development program at the University of Umeå. The overall purpose was to





contribute to the development of rural areas in the north of Sweden. Through this project the University of Umeå would also be given the chance to develop expertise within the field of distance education and become front actors in the use of new practise in tutoring.

The government took a second step by allocating resources to co-operation between universities, a model for development in practice at many places within the European Union. By assembling expertise from a number of universities and by bringing together a number of different perspectives of interest stronger organisations for distance education should evolve. This initiative has offered the foundation for a number of consortiums that have taken on the responsibility to develop distance education courses as joint projects.

A third step was taken with the assembling of the Commission on Distance Education, DUKOM, in 1995. This commission was given the task to propose a future national strategy for the development of Distance Education. The commission delivered its proposal, "Flexible Education at a distance", in 1998. One of the practical results of the commission's work was the founding of the Swedish Institute for Distance Education, an authority with the objective to support development of distance education methods and practice at universities and non-formal education.

On the secondary and upper secondary level, the above-mentioned National Institutes for Distance Education, SSV, have continued their work. In 1998 they were given a special mission by the government to play a vital role as support organisations for a development of distance education resources at the municipal schools for adults.

Upper Secondary Level for Adults

Komvux

Municipal adult education includes both basic and upper secondary adult education. *Komvux* started up in 1968 for the benefit of adults lacking the equivalent of basic or upper secondary schooling. A new komvux curriculum came into force in 1994.

Basic adult education

Basic adult education corresponds to the nine-year compulsory basic school. It is intended to provide a basis for participation in the community life, working life and further study. The level at which studies are begun depends on each individual student's initial qualifications. Studies are concluded when individual educational targets have been met. Students decide their own rate of progress, studies can be combined with employment or work experience.

Basic adult education can confer qualifications corresponding to nine years' compulsory basic school. The compulsory school leaving certificate awarded to adults contains passes in four core subjects: Swedish, or Swedish as a Second Language, English, Mathematics and Civics. Other courses and subjects can be included in such a certificate. The municipality has a duty to offer basic adult education to adults who have not achieved the compulsory basic school leaving certificate.

Upper secondary schooling

Adult upper secondary schooling and upper secondary schooling for young persons have the same syllabuses, and as of 1994 they share the same curriculum. Adult education is the equivalent of upper secondary school for young people, but the two are not identical. The adult students' qualifications must be adequately supplemented to raise them to the same level as those of young persons. However, the courses provided may differ from those in regular upper secondary school as regards emphasis, content and scope.

The students themselves determine the number and combination of subjects and the rate of progress. Many students take only one or two courses. Those who have either completed all core subject courses or obtained at least 1,420 upper secondary school points can receive an adult upper secondary school leaving certificate.

Supplementary education

Supplementary education is a form of education in its own right providing further training in a certain occupation or training for a completely new occupation. Most of these programmes take between six months and a year to complete and focus on subjects such as economics, computing or tourism.

Särvox

Adult education for the mentally handicapped has the same curriculum as adult upper secondary education, but with specially adapted syllabuses and time schedules. Its task is to supplement pupils' previous education according to their previous studies, experience and aptitudes. *Särvox* programmes may thus confer qualifications both in individual subjects and in the equivalent of compulsory school for the mentally handicapped, or vocational studies in upper secondary schools for the mentally handicapped.

Swedish for immigrants

Swedish for immigrants (*sfi*) is intended to provide a knowledge of the Swedish language and Swedish society. Municipalities are obliged to offer *sfi* to newly arrived adult immigrants. Studies may be variously organised in different municipalities.

National Institutes for Distance education

There are two National Institutes for Distance education. They supplement adult education for those unable to find suitable *komvux* opportunities where they live. Parts of the teaching are in the form of distance learning. In addition, the students visit the SSV schools at regular intervals for tutored instruction.

Labour market training

Labour market training (*AMU*) is an instrument of labour market policy primarily intended as basic vocational education or further training for the unemployed. The Swedish parliament allocates money to the National Labour Market Board (*AMS*), which in turn distributes funding to county labour boards and employment offices. These purchase various training packages from, for example, *komvux*, commercial training companies or the AMU Group.





Staff training and competence development

Many workplaces have extensive training programmes for employees at all levels. In-house training of this kind may involve anything from practical vocational training to extensive theoretical studies. It may be carried out, for example, in association with universities and colleges, municipal commissioned training, AMU (labour market training) or with various commercial training companies.

One objective for the government during recent years has been to increase possibilities for adults to study on an upper secondary level at a distance. This possibility has mainly been offered by the above mentioned SSV-schools. A future strategy is develop the komvux-schools so they can function both as a traditional municipal school for adults, as well as a distance education organisation. A special task force was put together for this purpose, consisting of project members from SSV and a task force management from the Ministry of Education.

Non formal Education / Popular Education

Activities are wide and comprehensive. Around 75 percent of the Swedes from 18 to 75 years have at some time taken part in a study circle; around 40 percent have taken part in at least one study circle over the last three years. Thirteen percent have taken a folk high school course and eight percent have taken a long folk high school course.

Popular education is largely financed by grants from the government, from regional governments and local councils. The parliament has laid down the aims and conditions for granting government support to popular education:

- People are to be given the opportunity to influence their situation in life and take part in social development. Democracy is to be strengthened and developed. Interest in culture is to be broadened and participation and the individual's own creativity is to be furthered.
- Popular education is supposed to give priority to such activities that aim at bridging educational gaps and that are geared towards the people who are educationally, socially and culturally disadvantaged. Particularly important target groups are people of foreign descent, physically or mentally challenged participants and those unemployed.

The study circle is the most typical form of Swedish popular education. A small group of people meet regularly for a period of time, most often a night per week, to study a certain subject or theme or to take part in a cultural activity. The circle consists of five to twelve participants, one of them is the leader.

The study circles are characterized by democratic values and based upon the participants' taking responsibility for the work. Together they plan their studies, based on their own needs and interests. An important part of study circle methodology is the exchange of experiences and ideas between the participants and their own analysis of the subject studied.

A major part of popular education work, both in study associations and folk high schools, is done in close cooperation between popular movements and other organi-

sations which either are members of the study associations and /or are organisations responsible for folk high schools.

The National Council of Adult Education

is a non-profit association for the popular education organisations. The council distributes government grants to study associations and folk high schools and follows up and evaluates the activities. The council also surveys popular education's policy and coordinates international contacts.

Many interesting developments took place during the last years, mainly within the framework of the Adult Education Network (Folkbildningsnätet).

Higher Education

The Swedish system of higher education has undergone two major reforms in recent decades, the first in 1977 and the most recent in 1993. In 1993 the universities and institutions of higher education were granted greater autonomy. Now the central government lays down certain objectives and parameters, mainly financial, and delegates decisions about the orientation of the educational programmes provided to the institutions of higher education themselves.

Parliament and Government are fundamentally responsible for higher education in Sweden. Universities and institutions of higher education constitute independent agencies under the Government. In addition, there are a number of central government agencies working with issues of higher education.

During the 1990s, higher education has undergone considerable expansion. Today, nearly 250,000 individuals are pursuing full-time studies at Swedish universities and institutions of higher education. During the first half of the present decade the number of new students increased by almost 42 percent.

To be eligible to study at a Swedish university or institution of higher education you must satisfy certain requirements. These requirements are divided into basic general qualifications and special course requirements. The basic general qualifications are identical for all higher education throughout Sweden.

Students at an institution of higher education can receive state funding in the form of study assistance. To receive study assistance the student must meet certain requirements. Study assistance is divided into two parts: a study grant and a study loan. Foreign citizens may also receive study assistance if they are long-term residents of Sweden (more than 2 years).

More women than men study at Swedish universities and institutions of higher education. On the other hand, fewer women than men are teachers, especially in senior academic posts.

The Government is endeavouring to achieve a more even gender balance at Swedish institutions of higher education. New professorships have been created with this in view. However, this measure has generated a good deal of controversy.





Distance education at post secondary level is now well established in Sweden. A ruling and statutory principle of Swedish higher education is that all institutions of higher education are to be organised so as to ensure a fair geographical and social distribution of educational opportunities and access to further education.

Post secondary distance continuing education is characterised by a highly decentralised system. Institutional structures, production and delivery systems vary from university to university. Each department engaged in distance education is independently responsible for the course programme and for media and methods used. There is no central control of distance education nor does the individual university impose any restrictions on the liberty of the individual department to organise its distance teaching. Distance education forms an integral part of departmental activities and such a "distance teacher" usually has conventional teaching duties as well.

To promote the development of distance education a number of consortiums have been established. The most important ones are:

The Swedish Consortium for Distance Education

The Swedish Consortium for Distance Education established in June 1993 by the universities of Lund, Linköping, Umeå, Uppsala, and Växjö, and the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, is co-financed by the Government through the Swedish Distance Education Centre, and its member institutions.

The Consortium was the first attempt to broader educational co-operation within the Swedish academic system. Local managers are responsible for the operation at each member institution, governed by an appointed executive board.

To this date, about 7 000 students have participated in courses and some 250 teachers have contributed in course development and implementation.

The West Sweden Distance Learning Consortium

Created by the vice-chancellors of the universities in the west of Sweden in June 1994. The aim of the consortium is to collaborate in the provision of university level distance learning courses by means of the adoption of joint planning, development and evaluation strategies, and by working in partnership to provide and disseminate information about distance learning. The consortium also has, as an aim, the continuing development of teaching competence and skills within the field of distance learning.

The Swedish Distance University, SDH

SDH is the youngest consortium, consisting of the University of Örebro, the regional Universities of Gävle and Karlskrona-Ronneby, the Mid Sweden University, the non-formal study association TBV and the Swedish Educational Broadcasting Co. The National Agency for Higher Education (Högskoleverket) is a central authority for matters concerning institutions of higher education. Its tasks include evaluation and accreditation, carrying out quality audits, developing higher education, research and analysis, supervision, international questions and study information. It is also responsible for coordinating the Swedish university network (SUNET). The agency also offers an on-line catalogue of available courses (ASKEN).



Governmental initiatives

Commission on Distance Education, DUKOM

The government appointed special commission DUKOM was active between 1995 and 1998. The commissions' task was to propose a long-term strategy for the development for modern distance education with the support of ICT. As a source of background material for this proposal DUKOM supported 100 local projects between 1996 and 1997. 42 projects within the field of higher education, 35 projects within non-formal education and 23 projects within municipal adult education and 'others' were given funds by DUKOM. These 100 shared approximately 10 million Euro.

Pedagogical ideas

In the invitation from DUKOM to various educational providers to apply for funds, it stated that as starting point for the development work within the projects would be the student's own responsibility for their studies and increased possibilities to choose the way, time and pace of studies.

Swedish Institute for Distance Education, SIDE

SIDE was founded in 1999. The objective of SIDE is to support the development of distance education in higher education and non-formal education. SIDE is also supposed to be a national representative for Sweden in international matters concerning distance education.

SIDE will distribute funding for development projects in the field of flexible and distance education, and will also operate a national web site with resources for distance education.

During it's first two years, SIDE will have an annual budget of 5,6 million ECU. This budget will probably be increased as of 2001. SIDE will consist of a staff of 15 employees.

Governmental Task Force for Development of Distance Education in Adult Education

This group is working with the objective to develop the use of distance education methods in upper secondary level municipal schools for adults. The task force has been working since 1998, and it is co-operating with the two National Institutes for Distance Education, SSV. The practical work is carried out on a project basis.

The group is financed by and answers to the Ministry of Education. Annual budget is 1 million ECU.

Kunskapslyftet, The adult education initiative

The Adult Education Initiative is a five-year programme of investment and development in adult education initiated by the Swedish government in July 1997. It's aim is to ensure that the hopes and expectations placed in the programme by those taking part in the education and training, by public authorities and by the industry can be realised.

The principal target-group for this initiative is unemployed adults without three years of upper-secondary school education. The aim is to improve people's self-confiden-



ce, to increase their employability and to enable them to make use of opportunities for furthering their own development in their work. The programme is designed to assist participants in achieving the necessary qualifications and competence levels to study at a higher level, and to lay the foundations for lifelong learning.

Commission on Qualified Vocational Education, KY

Over the next few years, a pilot project involving qualified vocational education (QVE) is being carried out. QVE is a new form of post-secondary education in which one third of the time is based on advanced application of theoretical knowledge at a workplace. What this involves is not the traditional traineeship period, but active work–place learning and problem-solving in an overall educational context. The courses are based on close co-operation between enterprise and various course providers (upper secondary school, municipal adult education, higher education, companies).

The courses will be open to those coming directly from upper secondary school and to people who are already employed and wish to develop their skills within a defined area.

Non-governmental initiatives

Swedish Association for Distance Education, SADE

SADE was founded in 1984 for the purpose to support distance education in Sweden. SADE is an NGO with both private persons and organisations as its members.

NITUS

Nitus, the Network for ICT-based Education via Local Study-centres, is a non-profit organisation aiming to make higher education available outside the university cities.

At present 66 municipalities are members of the organisation. NITUS is co-operating with 14 universities and regional universities, who are formally responsible for the actual courses. NITUS provides the student with study facilities as video conferencing, Internet based educational tools and physical study centres in the municipalities.

Hermods

Hermods is the oldest existing distance education organisation. Hermods started as a correspondence school in 1898, and has existed ever since. Hermods offers courses both on upper secondary level, university level, and various other specialised courses. Hermods also co-operates with a number of upper secondary schools to offer a mix between distance and on-campus education.

Swedish Educational Broadcasting Co

The Swedish Educational Broadcasting Co, UR, is a part of the Swedish public service broadcasting family. UR is a limited company, owned by a special governmental foundation. UR has a special agreement with the government, which gives UR the rights to funding from the national licence fees, and the right to broadcast by the national terrestrial network.

UR was founded in 1978, with the purpose to offer distance education on a non-formal level. Through the years UR has co-operated with various distance education organisations in giving distance courses supported by broadcast material. UR is currently a member of the distance education consortium for higher education ("Svenska Distanshögskolan").

The Foundation for Knowledge and Competence, KK-stiftelsen (KKS)

KKS was founded by the Swedish State in 1994. The foundation was given 460 million ECU as founding capital.

The objective of KKS is to support development of competence and to create conditions for economic growth. KKS promotes the use of ICT, develops co-operation between industry, university and research.

KKS distributes funds to pilot projects, and has up to now distributed around 100 million ECU to various projects. KKS also runs a web database (KNUT) with information on all projects supported by KKS and also on various other projects.



List of used abbreviations:

AMU	Labour market training
AMS	National Labour Market Board
SSV	National Institutes for Distance Education
KKS	Foundation for Knowledge and Competence
FC	First Class (conference system)
SIDE	Swedish Institute for Distance Education
DUKOM	Commission on Distance Education

AUSTRIA

Gitta Stagl, Margarete Wallmann

ADULT EDUCATION IN AUSTRIA

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Structure

The term *adult education* is applied to a number of institutions and organisations of essentially non-uniform character. The term adult education is also used to designate a specified form of non-obligatory, non-formal education offered to adult people from various strands of life.

The variety of institutions dates back to the determination of the progressive as well as of the conservative camp to exert its influence on education by providing opportunities for education. The different social interest groups were as much willing to tailor cut education for particular purposes. (The new Austrian government in existence since February 2000 does not convey much hope for a change either, and budgetary problems indicate a rather tough period for innovative adult education projects. All these facts will probably have some influence on the existing structures in Austrian adult education.)

The non-formal character used to be a by-product of a strictly regulated institutionalised educational system which allowed little permeability and barred a great part of the population from higher qualifications.

Adult education played a central role in developing new forms of teaching and learning. By and by non-formality turned from a setback to an advantage.

Courses were on one hand aimed at the ordinary person interested in various subjects, eager to learn as well as hungry for new scientific knowledge conveyed in a clear and outspoken language.

Fascism and war abolished any form of education obliged to enlightenment, knowledge, participation and critical thinking.

After World War II education became an essential tool on the political agenda to bridge the gap between the opposing political camps of Pre-War-Austria. Education worked as an essential tool in the creation of a commonly shared neutral and unbiased educational system for an apparently no longer 'divided' Austrian population. Since the intellectual, cultural, political creations of the 1st republic had been negated and abolished if not destroyed; since its proponents had been murdered or expelled there was little left to build on in adult education.

The fifties and sixties were marked by the strife for economic recovery and by political efforts to maintain the precarious equilibrium between differing political camps and differing social groups. All this meant: each institution had its form of adult education and stuck to it. The employers' association created an institute for further education aimed at the skilled and employed respectively those self maintaining in com-

merce, trade and technical fields (WIFI). The trade unions and their allies formed an institute for the improvement and enhancement of skills for the dependently working majority (BFI).

Various religious organisations had and have their particular institutions for adult education programmes.

Within these religious associations the dominant Catholic influence and the lesser - but nonetheless given - Protestant one show in a strong association of various institutions of Christian background committed to the dissemination of general and liberal education based on Christian attitudes and values.

The concept of a clearly non religious and broadly liberal and rich range of educational opportunities for the general public dedicated to fields of general and popular interest, history, languages, handicraft and physical exercise was and is followed by an associated chain of institutions called Volkshochschulen. The term Volkshochschulen could be taken as a programmatic title. Provision of higher education for the whole nation.



In the seventies education was no longer a field to demonstrate frictionless unity of a divided nation. Education became a central issue for the public and the state. The traditional rift between short time education for the majority and long time education for the few was to be overcome. It was then that adult education began to rip off its shadowy existence and started to have its share within the educational reform initiatives.

Adult education could play this role because of its character as a flexible, permeable, widely scattered and diversified branch of education outside the formal, traditional and strictly regulated institutionalised forms of education.

The relevant national law was passed in 1973; that law stated that adult education would be an issue of primary interest for the public, a branch of education which should be promoted, supported, encouraged and subsidized by the state in all its efforts without losing its programmatic autonomy.

Mandate

The law issued explicitly said that national financial means are to be dedicated for adult education and public libraries in order to 'assist institutions and actions directed at the adoption of knowledge and skills and the acquisition of critical faculties as well as at the development of individual gifts in the sense of permanent further education'. (Förderungsgesetz 21. März 1973)

By passing this law with all good intentions possible the executive level claimed its own field of interest and opted its department of adult education in.

Religious, social and political lobbies, communities and counties had won an interested partner as well as a new rival with separate and distinctive interests. The subsumption under a general law implied the subsumption under a more general and all comprising approach to adult education and it set a general platform for the specific aims of the various institutions, associations and initiatives.



The law of 1973 set out to tackle the structural problems of education within the framework of adult education. The means spent were to further vocational and liberal education; were to encourage scientific research and the dissemination of scientific knowledge; were to facilitate measures to abolish educational inequality and to offer open access to education and second chance education; were to ensure a broad range of publications on adult education, were to establish new accessible library systems.

The determination to act was followed by the establishment of federal departments for the advancement of adult education (Förderungsstellen des Bundes für Erwachsenenbildung) in each of the nine provinces of Austria.

From the onset this construction was liable to conflicts of various nature. Whereas the department of adult education as the executor of the above mentioned law and the federal departments for the advancement of adult education were determined to settle structural problems, the various independent associations wished to follow their independent route of programming.

As a provider of financial maintenance, of subsidies and of finances for additional staff, for various types of lectures, for projects as well as for programmatic efforts to cooperate on a broader level the department was welcome as a partner.

Where the department understood its mandate as a call for setting up new initiatives outside the traditional setting of adult education be it cooperation in scientific research between university and adult education, be it centres for the publication of study material and books on various aspects of adult education, be it the set up of outstanding and innovative forms of library usage and supply and structure or associations for the advancement of research in the field of open and distance learning disapproval and animosity were aroused and blossomed regardless of attempts to reconcile and placate.

Still, a couple of decisive measures were effective and led to a change in adult education. The claim for the preservation of diversity and independence led to the founding of the general assembly of adult education institutions in all of Austria (KEBÖ) in order to have a platform for counselling, advising and communicating on a regular basis with the federal department for adult education and its regional departments. The federal department of adult education created a programmatic platform to further cooperation and united efforts on various central issues. The programmatic platform understood itself as a systematic approach to structural problems in adult education and as a broadly laid out invitation to the different institutions to participate in what should develop into a future network for synergetic effects in adult education.

Rather singular is the provision of an institute in Upper Austria for further education and training for trainers, lecturers and educationalists (BIFEB). This institute covers seminars and workshops on supervision, management and group processes as well as seminars on general adult education topics, workshops for language trainers, for tutors and for those publishing educational, learning and teaching material.

Another focus of national importance is the provision of financial and programmatic backings for the various needs in second chance education.

In Austria any form of skilled labour requires a certificate of general education

(Hauptschulabschluß). Any form of higher education requires either a certificate (Maturazeugnis) or a number of 'A' level examinations taken as an external student (Externistenreifeprüfung) or a certificate showing the aptitude to choose particular studies (SBP - Studienberechtigungsprüfung) or (a novelty) a certificate proving the aptitude for higher qualification in English, German, Mathematics as well as showing theoretical clarity in a practised professional field of work (BRP - Berufsreifeprüfung).

During the last ten years a number of Volkshochschulen have developed and delivered thoroughly structured curricula and courses for passing the general certificate of education. Some of the Volkshochschulen have specialised on offering courses and special tuition for the university entrance examination for those without 'A' level standards of knowledge.

Answering the risen demand for foreign language learning in general, for the languages of the countries in the immediate neighbourhood and for thousands of migrants who want to learn German in particular there is a rich variety of offers at least all over Vienna and in some other capitals of the nine provinces of Austria. Not only do the different institutions offer a rich variety of languages and levels and materials, there is above all a rich variety of methods applied ranging from intensive courses with class work and homework to rudimentary forms of telelearning and self-directed learning in combination with directed teaching.

An institution dedicated exclusively to collecting, storing and grouping information on educational offers and handing them out for free to everybody interested by phone, electronically and in person was EBIS (Erwachsenenbildungsinformationsservice - Adult Education Information Service) but it was closed down despite its obvious success (more information about EBIS and the follow-up institution in part 5).

Structural problems still ahead

The general shift towards adherence to the so called 'free play' of market forces has not only posed a challenge to long living notions on educational services for adults but has also turned the adult education sector into a desirable object for profit.

While the challenge posed is to be coped with by measures against the natural tendency of institutions to stick to accustomed and long acquired forms of conventionality and self-interest, it nevertheless threatens to destroy the varied diversity of offers combining leisure, curiosity, pleasure and achievement. This very combination used to be the trademark of adult education opportunities.

While asking for fees where there used to be offers free of charge is debatable, the necessity to provide even more accessible educational services and to create the appropriate pedagogical framework and to invest know-how, knowledge and a lot of resources into advanced and effective forms of learning requires a form of financial supply incompatible with profit making. National and regional funding is a primary task for any long term educational enterprise and any long term educational policy.





The challenge posed and the tendency towards learning anew, towards permanent education, and towards flexibility in skills and competences ask for a shift in focus for the adult education sector.

The adult education sector has to make broad use of its 'extramural' capacity by working as a provider and as a promoter of bridges and accesses between the different formalised sectors of education at the same time maintain its non-formal qualities.

It has to seek new forms of cooperation reaching out to art and culture, to small and medium enterprises, to libraries and media centres as well as to universities and other sectors of tertiary education.

Adult education has to make use of its often praised flexibility and permeability by daring to step out of the traditional teacher-bound and place-bound educational environment and by offering flexible and open as well as self study opportunities based on and supported by information technology (IT).

Offering flexible forms of learning does not only aim at winning new groups of learners besides those already educated and skilled.

Open and flexible forms of learning might help to rescue one of the priceless merits of adult education in particular, non-formal education in general: the standard of bringing together individual needs, wants and wishes and educational objectives.

A step towards flexible and individualised forms of learning and thus to individualised offers of tuition and access to knowledge resources will help to tackle two central problems of adult education: the lack of achievement standards and the lack of credit transfer and the still rigid separation of vocational and liberal education.

Lack of standardization is not a specific trait in adult education, it is more or less a general feature of education in Austria. Lack of standards do not only leave much space for arbitrariness and personal dependency, where it would be only too obvious to ask for clearly set tasks and competences; lack of standards is an essential obstacle for individual and general mobility in qualification and for the acquisition of knowledge.

Lack of standardization and the absence of accreditation as a means of self-assessment and assessment form a setback for free and rational choice of education and training.

Lack of standardization form a barrier towards internationalisation and mobility of work force as well as for the exchange of experiences on all theoretical and practical fields. Standardization is not only a necessity for permeability, it is an important means towards the introduction and the development of methods of self study and distance learning for independent learners.

The yet dominant separation between training for a vocation and education for broadening one's horizon stems from a clearly anachronistic and outdated notion of humanistic education which used to be a nineteenth century self-definition of education for the better off. Recent developments have their own share in sweeping aside notions of that kind. Processing information and transferring it into knowledge and the versatile usage of language are of overall importance; the advanced understanding and production of written forms, the grasp for structural features and the competen-



ce 'to read' what is going on constitute the main elements of any educational and training procedure. All of these components are regarded as the constituents of any modern learning process.

In logical conclusion of what has been said above the federal department for the advancement of adult education in Burgenland has launched a thoroughly structured course on further education and training for trainers, lecturers and educationalists in vocational, firm-internal and liberal education. The course has been developed by a cooperation between a professional agency for counselling, educating, caring and for developing flexible structures for and within working tasks of all kinds (TOPS) and a interdisciplinary institute for research and in-service training (itself a cooperation between three different universities) and dedicated to the enhancement and to the analysis of social problems as learning processes.

This course deals with learning and teaching, learning and training needs, the delivery of knowledge and information, conflict mediation and counselling. The course will be closed by a presentation and a symposium. An evaluating study is to accompany the course and to provide feedback and learning for educationalists on all levels.

It is projects like the one just described, which provide us with a vision of how to deal with the prevailing slope between urban and rural areas in our country.

Whereas the urban areas are well ahead in infrastructure and provision of and for educational demands of various types, the rural areas suffer from poor supply, long and complicated journeys, a want in institutions and places and the difficulty on the side of educational institutions to get in contact with people living in secluded areas, probably widely scattered and in border regions or in neglected and scarcely developed areas.

To initiate telematically supported distance learning models, to offer first class study material and to further all forms of access - be it to educational opportunities and knowledge resources, be it to various levels of competence - is a must for the years coming.

EDUCATION AS A FACTOR FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The special conditions of the Burgenland

The Austrian "county" Burgenland was declared a target 1 area by the EU in 1994. This was the official confirmation that it was one of the less developed regions in Europe. Why was this part of the country incapable of liberating itself from the mark of backwardness? A simple answer is impossible here - a whole set of (historical) factors is responsible - historical, geographical, demographic and economic ones:

One important reason for lagging behind is certainly the specific geographical situation: the Burgenland is situated in the Eastern part of Austria - in the North East stretching to the border of the Slovak Republic, in the East to Hungary and in the South East to Slovenia. After the end of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy in 1918 the Burgenland was passed to Austria and now the new border intersected a common,



organically grown and traditionally agrarian economic region. The plebiscite in 1921, when the majority of the population of the Burgenland voted for Austria (after an objection made by Hungary), still deepened the division of the region into two parts. The political division after the Second World War aggravated the disadvantages of the new border region, the permeability of the economic sector was severely impeded for over 40 years promoting its own marginalisation.

Other characteristics which do not necessarily increase the attraction of the economic location: the Burgenland covers over 160 km in length (North-South), but is only between 4 and 60 km wide. A uniform development was not only impossible for the region, there are also areas, for instance in the South Burgenland, that have to be classified as extremely peripheral (the distance between Jennersdorf in the South Burgenland and the capital Eisenstadt is 142 km). Altogether 41 % of the population cannot reach their capital within 60 minutes by car (Austrian average: 18 %). All centres of industry relevant for the Burgenland lie outside the region - Vienna in the North, Graz in the West, Bratislava and the centres of Western Hungary like Győr, Szombathely and Zalaegerszeg in the East, near the border. Within the region there are only small villages and towns with 200 to 10.000 inhabitants.

The great differences of the development within the region manifest themselves in a clearly imbalanced gradient from North to South : the gross national product per capita in the South Burgenland is 15 % less than in the Northern part, the work density (number of job in relation to the number of inhabitants) in the South reaches only 70 % of the Burgenland average. All in all the regional gross national product is only 67 % of the EU average.

With its 3.966km² and 270.880 inhabitants the Burgenland is a relatively small target 1 area. The population density of 68 inhabitants per km² (Austrian average: 93, EU-average: 146) makes it a sparsely populated area. The region used to suffer from a continuous decline in population, especially in the border communities. The arrival of immigrants between 1981 and 1991 compensated for the negative birth rate (-1,4 %) and stopped the decline in population. For the next 15 years a stable development has been predicted. About 33 % of the employees working outside the Burgenland can reach their work place only by car. Many commuters work in Vienna during the week and return to their local communities only for the weekend.

This is due to the great lack of jobs. There has been a kind of thrust in growth after the opening of the Eastern borders but there is still a lack of jobs for highly qualified work force, a lack of infra-structural development in some fields (energy, data networks and, partly, roads and railroads) and of providing research space (there is no University in the Burgenland) etc. Not surprisingly very few firms have transferred high quality enterprises to the Burgenland so far which in turn led to the migration of a great part of the intellectual potential of the region, mainly into the neighbouring centres Graz and Vienna.

School and Adult Education in the Burgenland

Basically the school system in the Burgenland does not differ from the rest of Austria. After the pupils leave compulsory school at the age of 14 they can choose between



various possibilities to continue their training: he/she can choose a *Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule* (secondary school system leading to University entrance exam) or a specialised form of vocational upper secondary education (specific type of combined general and vocational education leading to full-value Austrian A-level). He/she can also choose an apprenticeship in which case he/she is obliged to go to a vocational apprentice school, usually once a week or in a 2- month block training per annum. Those who decided in favour of the general secondary Grammar school could graduate at the age of 18, which opens up the possibilities of University training.

This duality between general comprehensive training and vocational training is also reflected in Adult Education and in the offers of continuing education, although the borders between the two have become gradually blurred. The great majority of schools is government-operated, the sector of continuing education is shouldered by organisations and associations forming an institution called Adult Education. And while schools, colleges and Universities are clearly ruled by legal regulations none of these exist in the Adult Education sector. Only a few evening schools (all over Austria - but not in the Burgenland) are a part of the secondary general and vocational education, rooted in an academic tradition, and government-operated, while the main part of the continuing education sector is rather wild-growing and orientated towards the needs of potential clients or towards the short term needs of the labour market - more or less supported by the provincial governments and communities. So there are few legal regulations concerning Adult Education as an institution, there is little intervention and meddling from the part of the state and - unfortunately the inevitable result - little financial support by the so-called public "purse". Only 0,3 % of the entire budget of the Ministry of Education flow into Adult Education. To be fair it must be said that the budget of the Adult Education department has risen by 60 % since 1991. The major part of this money was invested in structural innovations.

Adult Education organisations have been founded and maintained almost exclusively by private organisations and groups. Religious associations, syndicates for workers and employees, political parties as well as scientific and cultural amalgamations were and are active in this field while the role of the state authorities consists mainly in subsidising, supporting and counselling.

Regional branches of the Adult Education association for promoting Adult Education have already been established since 1972. The Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs (BM) is in charge of and acting on behalf of service centres, their task is to bring information and counselling to Adult Education institutions as well as the initiation and co-ordination of co-operative encounters and educational projects. The fact that these institutes are established in the region allows a differentiated observation of the development in the Burgenland and thus a more specific use of subsidies. They are also important turntables for the contact to national and international co-operation partners and to the BM. The regional branch for the promotion of Adult Education in the Burgenland is a consultant member of the Conference for Adult Education in the Burgenland and in the majority of the organisations active in this position. It is the co-ordinator of many co-operative Adult Education measures.



The above explained specifics of the Burgenland - rural population structure, relatively little industrialisation limited for decades by the marginal and border situation, the lack of big cities, long distances to industrial and educational centres - are not only reflected in the relatively low number of A-levels, the interest and participation in continuing education activities is also the lowest in Austria.

An economically stable and competitive Burgenland will inevitably have to train a potential of qualified employees up to the needs of the labour market today - mainly regarding the flexibility and capability for quick "re-thinking" and "re-learning". Continuing education will become a necessity, especially for the economic development. And in order to reach any clients at all and to stimulate the demand the special conditions of the region have to be taken into account. One of them, the urgent need for qualification (from the part of the employers as well as from the employee's) was not perceived at all until recently.

When taking into account all the peculiarities of the region the following tasks of continuing education in the Burgenland stand and stood in the centre (the ranking is not referring to their importance):

- + structural improvements allowing decentralisation and regional access to continuing education
- + stronger orientation towards open and flexible learning forms concerning
 - a) the space and time arrangement
 - b) the conditions for admittance
 - c) content-orientated shaping of the learning process
 - d) accompanied learning
- + more professionalism in educational advice and guidance services

An important foundation for turning these tasks into effective measures was the co-operation and the establishment of a network of Adult Education institutions. Through the co-ordination of the regional branch for promoting Adult Education of the Adult Education association a study group of 11 Adult Education institutions from the Burgenland was formed already in 1995, its targets being the representation of common interests and the elaboration and implementation of co-operative projects. Since 1996 the Conference of Adult Education in the Burgenland (BUKEB) as well as some of its institutions, for instance the folk high schools in the Burgenland, have set various measures towards more professionalism and the creation of a framework for open and flexible learning.

List of used abbreviations:

BM	Bundesministerium - Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs
BUKEB	Conference of Adult Education in the Burgenland
EBIS	former Adult Education Information Service
BIFEB	Institute for Further Education and Training of Trainers
VHS	Volkshochschulen - folk high schools
Bfi	Institute for the furthering of vocational training

Luica Piva (ed.)

ALTO ADIGE: POSITION AND CHARACTERISTICS

Alto Adige is situated in northern Italy and it is a border zone in which three linguistic groups live: Italian, German and Ladin. They are under the tutelage of an Autonomy Statute which guarantees every citizen to frequent schools and to take part in initiatives of education in their own language.

According to the latest census of 1991, the Germans with 287.503 citizens represent 67.99% of the population; the Italians with 116.914 represent 27.65% and the Ladins with 18.43 represent 4.36%.

The Ladins are the oldest and at the same time the smallest language group in the Province. They were already resident in this country at the time of the Roman conquest of Raetia, but were then increasingly pushed back by the invading German tribes and germanised. Today Ladin language and culture is maintained in the two Dolomite valleys of Val Gardena and Val Badia. As the smallest language group in Alto Adige, the Ladins are the most endangered linguistic minority, with a need and a right to special measures of protection.

The Italians in Alto Adige live mainly in the towns of Bolzano and Merano and in the bigger centres. In the town of Bolzano alone live 68.109 of the total 116.914 Italians in the whole Alto Adige.

With nearly 68% the German language group provides the majority. Together with Ladins the German speaking group represents a linguistic minority within the Italian state for which concerted measures of protection for the maintenance of their linguistic and cultural characteristics were established with the Autonomy Statute.

Although they have many characteristics in common, the cultural origins and forms of cultural expression of the three linguistic groups in Alto Adige are nevertheless very different, just as culture in a multilingual land should necessarily be seen as different. Different historical and social traditions mean that depending on the characteristic of the ethnic group in question the cultural form of expression will also be different. In order to ensure the independent cultural development of each linguistic group, each of them must have its own administrative and organisational domain. Nevertheless there are a number of areas, for example in music and art, where close co-operation between all three linguistic groups results in mutual enrichment.

According to the principle governing subsidies, the organisation of the three linguistic groups are supported by the Province. They benefit from this financial support and can use it without the Provincial government influencing the autonomy of these institutions and associations. The Italian ethnic groups co-operates closely with other Italian provinces and regions, while the German and Ladin ethnic groups maintain active contacts with the German and Ladin cultural worlds.





The powers of the Province of Alto Adige with regard to the education sector are laid down in the Autonomy Statute. Within the framework of primary legislative powers (Art. 8 of the Statute) the Province can regulate independently the spheres of nursery schools, school welfare, school building as well as vocational education and vocational training and further education. With regard to primary and secondary school teaching the Province was granted secondary legislative powers, which means that the principles of the relevant state legislation must be considered. Recently the Italian state has delegated even this competence and now the Province is working on a law which defines the organisation of school in Alto Adige.

In the sector of further education all types of organised learning are included that are not contained in the school sector. Support of this sector is regulated by Provincial Law n. 41 of 1983. Since 1994 the sector as a whole consists of about 6.230 programmes with about 114.000 hours of teaching and with 147.000 participants. The sector is run by several organisations and education centres functioning on a provincial level. The organisations and associations of the Italian language group are operating mainly in the big centres of the Province.

After all, in a broad survey about the needs of the population of Alto Adige regarding continuing education and culture (1996) over 80% considered further education very or rather important. But participation was limited: in 1995 24,5% of the population in Alto Adige participated in at least one further vocational training course, 18,3% in non-vocational further education courses. The German language group seems particularly keen on education being on top of the list of all providers (apart from visiting exhibitions and museums) - followed by the Ladin language group.

Ufficio Educazione permanente

The Ufficio Educazione Permanente is an operating unit of the Italian Culture Department of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano. The tests assigned to those structures from the provincial Council in the range of its primary competence are the following:

- co-ordination and technical advice in the sector of adult education and libraries;
- planning and realisation of projects;
- formation and adjournment in the sector of adult education and libraries;
- contribution to the institution, the running of libraries, activities and infrastructures in the sector of adult education;
- realisation, purchase and distribution of publications of local interest;
- promotion of reading;
- culture and recordings of audio-visual media;
- pedagogy, technology and distribution of audio-visual media.

In deference to the institutional tastes and to the budget at disposal, the office sets a series of objectives yearly with the purpose to realise through the more eligible initiatives, the aims for which it has been instituted.

Sphere of activity

In the sphere of its institutional competence the Ufficio Educazione permanente has been working for many years to further, in the Italian language population, the awareness of the importance of a lifelong continuing education. The initiatives conducted in that sense show the following approach:

Activity of information about the educational supply proposed on the territory from public corporations and private institutions;

Support by financial contributions to projects planned and realised by active educational organisations in the province of Bolzano, with a particular attention to innovative activities;

Adjournment seminars for the operators in the sector about the principal themes concerning adult education and its diffusion like, for example, the introduction of a correct didactic methodology for the planning and evaluation of the formative activities, or the use of the new network technologies to begin forms of open and flexible learning;

Predisposition of surveys in order to have a revised panorama about the needs and the educational offers and also about the availability of local institutions with regard to distance learning.

Information

The citizens of Alto Adige have the possibility to know what is offered to them in the educational sphere thanks to an information slip arranged by the Ufficio Educazione permanente every six months.

The publication titled "Vivere e aggiornarsi" comes out regularly every September and every March, it is for free and it is delivered, on request, to all the people interested. The information slip is given out also by the most important public institutions, like libraries, cultural and youth associations, ambulance stations and syndicates. It is subdivided in two parts. The first one presents private organisations and public offices offering various opportunities of learning to the local community. The second one is a list, subdivided in the following ranges: professional adjournments, school and university courses, languages, arts and different disciplines, health and gymnastic activity, culture and formation, civic ethical and social formation, courses and seminars organised in the reference period indicating the proposing institution, term, place and hour of development, and even the total cost of the initiative.

The information slip is also accessible on Web pages of the civic net of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano.

For those who love technology, it is also available on video and on CD-Rom that can be screened by the Audio-visual centre of the Province.

The film contributes through images and slogans of great effect to the diffusion of an awareness about the importance of lifelong education.

The CD-Rom allows personalised research into matters or institutions of interest.

And finally the office participates every year with a stand at the autumn fair in September at the ice-palace. The presence at this event means the possibility to approach a great range of people, among them also people who usually do not frequent





the forming of initiatives and who can find new interests and opportunities of cultural enrichment there.

To make the exposition more visible, simple competitions have been arranged in the last years that won some prizes put at disposal from sponsors, like computers, Internet subscriptions, coupons for the attendance of courses.

In accordance with the necessities and priorities of the moment, every edition of the initiative has its own specificity. The fair '99 will be called "Caffè Cultura" in the consideration that the activities of adult education shall always be more able to meet the personal needs. Therefore, apart from the information concerning the educational organisations present in the territory and the course activity in a narrow sense, consultations will be given to the citizens by sector operators, and informations about the services of the public libraries in Alto Adige.

These institutions, in addition to encouraging the love for the book and for reading, have a great capacity at the moment. They represent the information centres par excellence and encourage conditions of an autonomous, open and flexible learning.

The Audio-visual Centre of the province covers an important space. It has the task to diffuse the multimedia culture by specific initiatives directed at the community or at target groups, also thanks to the disposal of audio-visual aids like VHS, CD-Rom, audio-cassette, slides. The material can be looked up in a catalogue and in the Internet. It accounts for 5000 titles concerning either the local history and culture, or the different ranges of learning. It can be borrowed from individual persons, cultural associations and public corporations, or screened by an equipped info-point which allows also the free Internet navigation for study or research purposes. The centre offers consulting help of two net-coaches in fixed timetables.

The idea of this project is based on the concept that learning can be a pleasure. Exactly for this reason the "menu" of the exposition week contains readings, musical intermezzos, artistic workshops etc.

Financing of educational organisations

About thirty associations are present in Alto Adige which regularly develop educational activity for the Italian language population.

The Province grants contributions for activity and investments to these organisations up to 80% of the expenses, as well as awards for the personnel of larger organisations.

Many educational projects stress the importance of innovative interventions in the sphere of distance learning.

There are three organisations in particular that have started pilot-projects in this range so far: C.L.S., Tangram and Cedocs (for more information about them see Chapter 4b).

Adjournment

The formation of operators in the sphere of adult education is extremely important for the further growth of a range that is strategic in the European society of our time. The "Ufficio Educazione permanente" has always paid attention to these aspects and most of all in the last years it has promoted the participation in adjournment initiatives in organising congresses and seminars directly in that sense.

It has realised in particular many meetings concerning the introduction of correct didactic methodologies for the planning and evaluation of the educational projects for the citizens of Alto Adige, and to introduce acceptable standards of quality in the organisation of the formative institutions.

Finally space has been dedicated to the information about the potential and the use of new information technologies. In this connection a congress has been organised, titled "Learn-net: Sapere in rete" that took place in Merano in September 1998. Although a survey indicates that in Alto Adige 37% of the adult population have participated at least in one educational initiative, it is however necessary to try to approach the formation and learning of those who are unlikely to take part in the educational opportunities.

In this connection the role of new technologies is fundamental: the distance formation, the new learning instruments and Internet are solutions that allow to organise the periods of study in a flexible way, and they reduce the transfers to reach the formation's places.

Three aims were intended by the office, with the organisation of the congress:

- to analyse advantages and disadvantages of telelearning and new didactic models of multimedia learning;
- to individualise the basic teaching skills for an optimal use of new media;
- to offer the opportunity of comparison and an exchange of experiences between the Italian and the German language area.

More than 200 people were present at the congress organised in collaboration with the German language group.

The "Multimedia Village", a show-exposition of products, services and initiatives has been the background and the carrier wave of the whole manifestation.

The office hopes that the local operators will start experimental projects using the powerful multimedia instruments, as a consequence of this congress.

Next November a CD-Rom will be ready which contains the results of the congress, information about some pilot-projects the speeches of the experts and useful addresses of institutions specialised in the field of telelearning and distance education.





Surveys and researches

The provincial normative in the sphere of adult education foresees that the Province has to do checks on the demands and the realisation of adult education initiatives. The office regularly develops surveys with ASTAT, Provincial Institute of Statistic about the needs and the formative requests of the citizens of Alto Adige, and also about what is offered to them in the different spheres.

The latest work published in an information slip titled "Educazione permanente e cultura in Alto Adige" has been realised in 1996. It indicates that in the province of Bolzano the population pays enough attention to the educational problems and about 40% of adults have frequented an initiative at least once.

Those concepts aim at deepening the aspect of open and flexible learning and the sensibility of educational organisations in this field. Thanks to the work of C.L.S., Tangram and Cedocs, which have a lot of experience in this sector, the following questionnaire has been arranged which will be given out to the territory operators. The results will allow to individualise the adapted strategies in this range.

Answers to questions of the project management

The newly elected government (November 1998) of Alto Adige states in its governmental declaration that they are very interested in making the most of Europe's diversity and doing their best to bring down borders. This is of tremendous importance in Alto Adige with three different cultures and unevenly developed sub-regions. The concept is to support all those eager to learn by providing them with the necessary resources.

How does this concept of creating the necessary framework conditions show in adult education?

The most important aspect of this concept is the spirit of subsidisation, that means financial support for the organisations operating in South Tyrol.

How does this concept apply to the three differing language groups?
in the respect of better integration

in the respect of provisions for keeping the respective own identity

Surely the second aspect is prevalent.

How do these resources work when it comes to vocational and continuing education?

In the same way.

How does the newly established Free University Bolzano with its concept of teacher training effect adult education?

It is too early to say. At the moment the University has the task to train the teachers of the nursery and primary school and doesn't intervene in the field of adult education.

The concept of lifelong learning is a priority in the governmental declaration?

Framework conditions are to reforms: from quantity to quality.

How does this apply to creating new provisions in open and flexible learning?

Principally in offers for tutoring and training and in promotion of pilot projects which guarantee high quality in their planning, structure and application.

There is a stress on introducing and implementing IT technology and the willingness to promote tele-working and tele-learning.

How broadly have these concept been tried out so far?

With regard to tele-working the Autonomous Province of Bolzano has begun some projects with a small number of its employees and, as the first results confirm, they seem to be successful. In connection with tele-learning the competent office for adult education for the Italian speaking population organises adjournment seminars for the trainers in this field, to give them the necessary information and knowledge, for example the correct didactic methodology for the planning and evaluation of activities or the correct use of the new network technologies in adult education. It also gives financial support to organisations which start pilot projects using IT.

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Where has tele-learning been implemented?

There isn't a special field or place. It depends on the experiences of the single organisations and the needs of their public of reference. The projects of C.L.S., Cedocs and Tangram try to improve the offer in the subjects in which they are specialised themselves.

Have these applications been evaluated?

Not yet, as far as the office knows. They are at the beginning and it is too early to come to a conclusion.

In 1996 there was a broad survey on demand in continuing education. This survey showed that 80% of population regard continuing education as very important, but only 37% have participated. What are the reasons (in your opinion) for the gap between interest in demand and low participation?

Italy does not have a long tradition in adult education. The result of the survey compared with similar investigations in other Italian regions is very good. Surely the participation can be increased by broader information about the opportunities offered in the territory, a more flexible structure of the courses and by an advertising campaign about the importance of lifelong learning for the citizens of Europe in the third millennium.

If low participation can be brought back to a lack of decentralised offers have there been more decentralised provisions in the last three years?

Yes, partially, but not enough.

Have the offers in the last three years tried to meet problems with ranking of interests (environmental education/top-priority; personality and health/second place; literature and arts/third place; languages/fourth place)?

The competent office gives financial support considering beyond the quality of the projects the variety and balance among different subjects. At the same time it must also respect the freedom of the organisations.

There is a significant relation between mother tongue and participation in continuing education. Have these findings been considered in new provisions?

Yes.



How have these findings been considered?

In giving the different language groups the opportunity to organise their educational offer autonomously according to their needs.

In your questionnaire you have asked which components have an effect on participation. You have named the following components:

- costs
- time
- distance
- teaching methods
- organisation
- others

How would you answer these questions?

In the following order:

time

costs

distance

teaching methods

organisation

others

What is your opinion on the past experiences in distance learning?

I have quite a good opinion. C.L.S., Cedocs and Tangram have the merit to try new forms of organising adult education. After a necessary period of application and a careful evaluation, it will be possible to gather concrete experiences to improve flexible and open learning in South Tyrol and to draw guidelines for other organisations.

Has there been a range of methods in distance learning or only one?

J don't think there is "the method".

Are these distance learning offers in the form of correspondence courses?

- in the form of tele-learning?
- with guidance and tutor?
- combined offers with on the campus provision?
- only online learning?

The projects of the three above mentioned organisations use different methods according to the specific needs of their learners. All the named methods contribute to open and flexible forms of learning.

Nick Meyer

ADULT EDUCATION IN ENGLAND

The national picture in England with respect to the education of those over 16 is changing rapidly.

In 1992 colleges of further education went out of local authority control and were funded directly by the Department of Education and Science (DES), now the Department of Education and Employment (DfEE). They received funding from the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) and this was done through establishing a mechanism based on the allocation of units. The funding would follow a student on the basis of:

- Entry (guidance on the course)
- On programme (the teaching/learning element)
- Achievement (the successful completion and resulting qualification)

The provider - normally a college would estimate how many units would be needed in a given year i.e. the number of students x the number of courses. Clearly longer courses commanded more units. Three times per year a college informed the FEFC on students' enrolment, retention and achievement. Each college was allocated on average level of funding (ALF) according to its size and overheads. This varied considerably - an Adult Education Service with relatively low overheads might have an ALF of £10 whereas a larger college might have an ALF of £18. So to provide the identical course the two providers would have very different incomes.

Until 1998 the FEFC set a growth target of 8% per annum. Providers exceeding their targets received £6 per unit for every unit they expended in excess of their allocation, to a maximum agreed with the FEFC. This meant that the government's strategy to widen participation could be implemented through providing additional funding to those colleges who successfully targeted those who were within the government's target groups. Each student who enrolls on a programme of study is required to complete a learning agreement, which identifies individual support needs, academic achievements, the nature of the guidance received and his or her aims for the course. This information, quite apart from being useful to the tutor, enables the FEFC to identify those geographical areas where participation is very low and to adjust the funding to encourage providers to target those wards which have been traditionally under-represented.

The second major government initiative aimed at addressing both the problems of unemployment and the training needs of employers, was the establishment of Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) in the late 1980s. TECs were regionally based and were set up to reflect the needs of employers. Representatives from a variety of major employers sit on the board. They are responsible for delivering the government's Youth and Adult Training Strategy, the funding of employment related training and other initiatives which respond to locally identified need.





A third major player in the provision of education for adults is the local education authority. Under the 1992 Further Education Act they had a duty to 'secure adequate provision'. However they were not empowered to apply directly to the FEFC for funding, but needed to make application through a sponsoring college. Many LEAs decided to contract the majority of their provision with the local colleges; others, such as in Norfolk, were determined to continue to retain a free-standing service, with funding from the LEA for non-vocational courses and funding from the FEFC for vocational courses, i.e. those leading to some form of accreditation. The difficulty has always been that the vocational/non-vocational divide has appeared arbitrary. In Norfolk, for example, the FEFC budget is almost twice that of the LEA budget, but there are twice as many adults attending LEA courses. This results in a massive discrepancy in price for the two types of course.

The current government has decided to attempt to rationalise a system which has grown too complex by unifying the three funding streams. Hence next year the FEFC and the TECs will be abolished and will be replaced by the Learning Skills Council (LSC). The LSC will devolve money to local LSCs (of which there will be one for Norfolk) who will contract with a wider range of providers - colleges, adult education services, voluntary organisations and private sector organisations to provide locally. Parallel to these developments are Local Lifelong Learning Partnerships which represent major providers, local government and non-statutory services and which are charged with developing a strategy according to local and employer need.

It is clear that the thrust of the present government is to promote partnership rather than competition. Prior to the last election Tony Blair famously said that the priorities for the new government would be 'Education, education, education'. The establishment of Individual Learning Accounts, the University for Industry and Learn Direct, a national learning help line are all initiatives aimed at widening participation and promoting a learning culture.

Many governments have seen the development of information and communication technology as a major factor in increasing levels of participation. They rightly point out that it provides opportunities for increased flexibility and learning at a distance, which is particularly vital for those who do not otherwise have the time to attend groups or who live in isolated rural areas. The difficulty has always been how to establish structures which support the individual learner in accessing knowledge. In Adult Education it is consistently found that one of the features which individuals value is the sense of belonging to a group, of learning with peers and of feeling that they are a member of a group with common aims and aspirations. Groups provide structure, support, dedicated time, and as Bandura has shown, the majority of adults learn more effectively from peers than from teachers. The challenge for any provider is thus to find the way in which learning through IT can be balanced with many individuals' need for other forms of support.

The University for Industry is commissioning learning materials which will meet the needs of employers and individuals. It is also instrumental in supporting the funding of Individual learning Centres, often based in libraries or high school locations where people can learn at their own speed and at a time which is suitable for them. However

the concern must be for those who have not accessed educational opportunities since leaving school and a number of initiatives have been addressed at this large target group.

For many, perhaps the majority, the way back is through providing programmes which interest them directly, either because they enhance their employment prospects or because it builds on an existing interest. This is a strength of community education which is in a position to provide locally in response to identified need.

Two initiatives in particular have contributed to the development of innovative provision in Norfolk. As a result of her research published as 'Learning Works' Helena Kennedy proposed that the FEFC fund collaborative projects which would address the issues of widening participation. As a result, in Norfolk a co-ordinator was appointed who marketed education and training opportunities through a series of road shows. The first in the series of road shows was launched by a locally famous footballer who, simply by his presence, attracted a large audience of people who would otherwise not have thought to attend. The project also worked with local voluntary organisations as a means of gaining access to potential participants.



The Employee Development Scheme also fell within the remit of this project. EDSs were introduced into England by Ford motors several years ago. The idea was that employees would be more confident and flexible in their approach to training if they had an experience of learning something which interested them and which they could choose. Thus the company paid the course fees and the individual gave his or her time.

In Norfolk a series of seminars were offered around the county for employers, explaining how the scheme might work and the TEC agreed to match any commitment from the employer. A number of companies took advantage of the opportunity and promoted the scheme to the workforce by inviting providers to stage an exhibition of their courses.

A programme entitled 'Guidance Skills in the Workplace' was developed to give personnel and training staff, particularly in SMEs the skills to identify the education and training needs of their workers.

This qualification was a parallel qualification to a programme entitled 'Initial Educational and Vocational Guidance'. The latter was developed for a range of workers - those in voluntary organisations, part-time tutors and Adult Education managers, health visitors, Youth and Community workers and those for whom it would be important to understand the post-school structure of education and training, and who would be able to refer students on to the most appropriate forms of provision. The results of these courses have been very encouraging. Participants invariably feel better informed about the range of courses on offer and so better able to advise their clients. In addition they are supported by the Careers Service who support a network of participants after the course has finished.

List of used abbreviations:

LEA	Local education authority
ALF	Average level of funding
TEC	Training and Enterprise Council
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council
LSC	Learning Skills Council
EDS	Employee Development Scheme
NVQ	National Vocational Qualifications



B) SELECTED EXAMPLES FOR OPEN LEARNING INITIATIVES OTHER THAN THOSE INITIATED BY PARTNERS

POLAND

Wojciech Gilewski

MATERIAL DESIGN AND DELIVERY MODES

Open and flexible learning can be done at a distance. Thousands of open university students work on their own for most of the time they study, rarely attending any sort of live session. Thousands of correspondence students work on their own, periodically sending assignments to distant tutors for assessment and comment. However, open/flexible learning can also happen in a crowded lecture room. Suppose the lecturer asks the class to spend a few minutes digging in some handout materials for the answer to some questions posed to the class; the class members work on their own for a while. Similarly, open/flexible learning can occur in laboratories, training centres, workshops - just about anywhere. It doesn't matter whether the learner is a part of a group or on his or her own, open/flexible learning can still happen.

Newcomers to open learning are often surprised at the variety of teaching and learning media available. Open learning can use all the media available in ordinary, classroom-based courses plus a number of others besides that. If you are about to write some open/flexible learning materials, you need to know which media are available to you. Even if you are simply deciding which of several published packages to use with learners, you may decide partly on the basis of whether they use acceptable media.

In most open/flexible learning the main medium is **print** (the written word together with pictures). This may be supported by audio-visual material - especially audio-cassette tapes, and slides or filmstrips. **Computers** are a key medium in some open learning. They may provide pre-structured teaching as in computer-based training. They may be used to explore multimedia programmes, via CD-ROM or Internet. And they may allow learners and tutors to keep in touch with one another through "computer conferencing" or virtual learning environment. **Practical work** may be relatively easy to arrange if learners are doing their open/flexible learning at work or in a college. Otherwise, more distant learners may have to be provided with their own "kits" of material and equipment, or be allowed to use laboratory or workshop facilities at a learning centre or some other convenient location.

Most open/flexible learning needs to involve the "human media" - personal interaction - among learners or between learners and a tutor. This may be done through frequent or occasional face-to-face contact or else through telephone discussions, through computer conferencing or virtual learning facilities.





It is worth to make a list of some of the media available in open/flexible learning.

Print

- Books, pamphlets, etc. - already published or specially written
- Specially written "wrap around" study guides to already published material
- Specially written self-teaching texts, e.g. "tutorials-in-print"
- Workbooks for use along with audiotape or videotape, computer based learning, practical work, etc.
- Self-tests, project guides, notes on accreditation requirements, bibliographies, etc.
- Maps, charts, photographs, posters, etc.
- Material from newspapers, journals and periodicals
- Handwritten materials passing between learners and tutor

Audio-visual

- Audio-cassettes/discs/CDs
- Radio broadcasts
- Slides or filmstrip
- Film or film loops
- Video-cassettes
- Television broadcasts
- Computer based training
- Interactive multimedia

Practical or project work

- Materials, equipment, specimens for learner's own use
- Field-work or the use of learner's local environment - e.g. observations, inter-views, collection of evidence, etc.
- Projects in local offices, farms, workshops, etc.
- Assignments based on learner's workplace

Human interaction

At-a-distance

- Telephone conversation between learner and tutor (supplementing written communications)
- Learner-learner telephone conversations
- Several learners in telephone contact at the same time, with or without a tutor, by means of a "conference call"
- Video conferencing
- Computer conferencing

Face-to-face

- Learners' self-help groups
- Help from line managers, mentors, technicians, others
- Occasional seminars, tutorials, lectures by tutors or other group organisers
- One-day, one week, weekend, or other short group sessions (residential or otherwise)

If you are to be adapting existing materials or composing new ones from scratch correct material design seems to be very important. The open/flexible learning writer needs to be a Jack of many trades. It's not just a case of telling a story. The module needs to be something that causes learning to occur. It does matter how the learning occurs. The aim should be for it to occur efficiently, enjoyably, lastingly and actively.

A good open/flexible learning module doesn't just contain printed pages which look more or less alike. It contains various tools to help the learning process to take place.

The crucial point about learning materials development is that it is not a solitary activity. It is a team activity, with each member of the team contributing a different expertise to the project. Ideally, the project manager should not have any other role on the team, which allows time for concentrating on coordinating the project and ensuring that the team members meet their deadlines.

In normal teaching practice, lecturers often collaborate as members of a team, giving each others feedback on materials prepared for teaching. The development team for material is simply a formal version of this type of collaboration. Although it is not impossible to produce some materials without a team, it is not advisable. The results are not as good as those produced by a team, and the experience is very gruelling.

The project manager has the job of planning and coordinating the work of all other team members, and ensuring that the work is completed on schedule. Ideally, this person has some expertise in the subject, but this is not essential.

The writer produces the text, with all its component parts, including self-assessment questions and assignments. The writer needs to be a subject expert. Ideally, the writer is an experienced teacher of the subject, and is up to date with current teaching methodology.

The instructional designer works with the writer to determine the structure of the course, and to ensure the teaching effectiveness of the text. The expertise needed for this role is an understanding of the principles of instructional design and the teaching methodology used in learning materials. An instructional designer who is not experienced in teaching the subject will need to draw first on the expertise within the team, then on research.

The technical reviewer works with the writer ensuring that the material is factually correct, accurate and up to date.

The editor checks and amends the text, in consultation with the writer and the instructional designer, as well as ensuring that all amendments to the text are incorporated and the text works as a whole. The editor is responsible for the style, tone and pitch of the language, and for ensuring that the text has all the features of open/flexible learning materials. This may involve extensive rewriting and some new writing. An open/flexible learning editor works closely with the instructional designer.

The graphic designer works with the editor to ensure that the visual presentation of the text is attractive, accessible and consistent with house style.

The illustrator interprets the ideas, sketches and drafts of the writer to produce illustrations, diagrams and graphs.

The stages of material design are explained as the following:

Planning phase

Research

During this stage, the project manager checks that the project is feasible and necessary. You need to answer the questions: Is there a real need for these materials? Are there other materials in existence that could be used for this programme? Who is the target group of students, and what are their characteristics? What will the project costs?





Evaluation and the material's validation report

The most common mistake in planning a project is to ignore the potential of some existing learning materials. The procedure for reviewing these learning materials helps you to thoroughly evaluate their potential use.

Project rationale

This form enables you to mistake a case for the project, summarising the reasons for the need for the learning materials, and outlining the benefits of producing them.

Target student group

In open/flexible models, learning can be taken outside the classroom, in the absence of a live teacher. The teaching must be embedded in the learning materials. This means that the teacher cannot respond and adapt to the needs of the student group. So you need to predict the range of needs that your student group might have, so that you can design the learning materials accordingly. Defining the target group in detail helps you to make these predictions and make appropriate decisions concerning the design.

Project budget

You have to make a cost benefit analysis, which simply shows how the cost of the project will be offset by the financial gains of your institution.

Instructional design plan and sample section

Assuming that your research suggests that you need to develop some new learning materials, you now need to begin planning the course structure by appointing a development team.

The team produces a course structure

The coordinator convenes meetings between the writer, reviewer and instructional designer, with two main objectives: establishing a working team, and agreeing about the instructional design for the course. The writer plans the sequence of topics and sub-topics, in consultation with the instructional designer. The reviewer checks this and agrees about this sequence with the writer.

The team produces a sample section

The writer produces a sample section. This section is reviewed by the instructional designer and the reviewer. If this stage proceeds well, the team can go through the next stages of production. If not, the coordinator needs to find out what has gone wrong and find a solution.

Development phase

During the development stage, the writer of the course follows the course plan to produce a section plan for each section of the course, and writes these sections, ensuring that all the necessary components are included.

During the development stage, the coordinator needs to liaise with the writer to arrange any illustrations and diagrams needed. The writer should incorporate all this graphic material into the text. It's also important for the coordinator to help maintain the writer's motivation, thus ensuring to meet the scheduled completion dates.

The technical reviewer and the instructional designer will revise each section as it is written. The coordinator needs to discuss any suggested modifications with the writer, who may sometimes need to discuss suggested changes with the reviewer or instructional designer.



Production phase

Editing the text

When the revision of the materials is complete, the editor works through the text to make it as clear as possible. It is the editor's job to make a final check that all the necessary components and features of a learning text are included. The writer needs to check all the alterations made by the editor, to ensure that the sense has been maintained.

Desk top publishing

The text is visually designed and laid out attractively, with the illustrations and diagrams reproduced to the highest possible standard, and correctly placed in the text.

Proof reading and printing

The finished text is now checked by the editor, to incorporate and check the final corrections. Ideally, the editor will do this.

When the final corrections are completed, the text can be printed.

Piloting the course materials

Once you have produced your course, you need to pilot it, to ensure that it works in practice, and to discover whether any modifications are needed. The evaluation is an important part of quality management.

You should have written "technical reviewer" and "editor". This is because you cannot verify the factual accuracy of your own writing; and you cannot finally edit your own writing. The point of these two roles is that they are carried out by someone other than the writer. It is easy for a subject expert (a writer) to assume expertise that the learner does not have. The other team members can all help to remedy this tendency.

Assessment

The methods of assessment for open/flexible programmes are the same as for a programme delivered face-to face, so you can use the assessment schemes that you normally use.

Quality of learning materials

We have seen that the process of producing new learning materials is time-consuming and expensive. Sometimes, the time and expense can be justified by the need for the learning materials, often because this increases student access to courses.

The quality of learning materials has a strong influence on the success of a course. First because good learning materials will help students to have a good experience of their course. Second because high quality learning materials help students' learning, they contribute to the success in their assessments.

Although the design of learning materials is a demanding and difficult task, successful materials can be produced by using efficient, standard procedures and a team approach. Each stage in the procedures has a specific objective, and is important for the success of the project. Each member of the team has a different expertise to contribute to create effective learning material.

FINLAND

Pirjo Keinänen

THE VIRTUAL FOLK HIGH SCHOOL

www.kansanopistot.fi

(Finnish Folk High School Association)

The Virtual Folk High School is an information society project supported by the Finnish National Board of Education and co-ordinated by the Finnish Folk High School Association.



What is it?

The Virtual Folk High School Project is carried out by the Finnish Folk High School Association for the combined benefit and advantage of all folk high schools. This project is financed by the Finnish National Board of Education. The Virtual Folk High School Project is open and flexible as well as rich and varied in form. Every folk high school can participate in its operations. The Virtual Folk High School Project is geared towards the positive utilization of webs and networks in the instruction offered by folk high schools. Its purpose is also the consolidation of its own image and the identity of folk high schools. By-products arising from this enterprise are flexible and interactive networks for both external and internal information distribution. Evaluation proceeds along all partitions.

Why?

The Virtual Folk High School is one of the means by which the desirability and accessibility of folk high school-related study can be increased. It also serves to intensify internal and external information distribution in respect to the folk high school movement. The association's home pages are being positioned within this environment, which will function, among other things, on behalf of marketing and as an instrument for collaboration between folk high schools and the association.

Everybody's welcome!

What is essential to the whole project is the fact that each and every institute can participate in its development. The institutes can form small networks which produce parts for the virtual whole. The virtual environment can thrive and develop all the time, providing the possibility to add components and elements to it on a flexible basis.

New possibilities

There is the possibility to gain benefit from the mutual virtual learning environment of the folk high schools, in such a manner that the variety of study programmes provided by these schools is diversified and that these institutes are increasing their collaboration. The main emphasis is on the placement of study elements and materials facilitating teaching on the Internet.



For teachers

For instructors and other staff members at the institutes, information shall be provided via this environment as to how the Internet can be utilised effectively as an aid in one's work. A personal "tips and pointers bank" for teachers shall be available, where anyone can add something to the matters facilitating teaching efforts, and through which useful hints on various subjects can be distributed for the beneficial use of the entire field.

THE VIRTUAL FOLK HIGH SCHOOL

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Study-related benefit with respect to curricular content and learning methods
- A concrete possibility to carry out folk high school studies in a virtual environment
- Operates within the venue of the World Wide Web

ASSOCIATION FUNCTIONS

- Distribution of information among the folk high schools (e.g., the search for part-ners for EU projects, study trials, etc.)
- Information exchange between the Finnish Folk High School Association and in-dividual institutes (e.g., announcements, orders and subscriptions, etc.)
- Notice boards for folk institute personnel groups (e.g., for instructors, kitchen and cooking staff, etc.)

SKYREG

INSTITUTE OFFERING

- Information about study possibilities (basic course series, short course-related activities)
- Real-time information with regard to all available student openings at the various folk high schools
- Presentations introducing the folk high schools

LEAPS Programme

www.vsy.fi (Finnish Adult Education Association / LEAPS)

The organizations respective to liberal adult education have already existed under circumstances of comprehensive transition for several years. Teaching establishments have been required to adapt to the disruptive forces of the market economy and to competition in the field of education. In such an environment, survival requires continuous development. The attempt to adapt to change is not in itself a sufficient vital prerequisite-it must be possible to create something new as well. In this maelstrom of change, however, the cultivation of special features pertaining to liberal adult education also comes to the fore. One must know both how to preserve the identity of the field and remain a contender in ever tougher conditions of competition.



The Liberal Education for Adult Proficiency and Skills (LEAPS) programme is the most extensive common developmental project to focus on liberal adult education in the history of the field. The LEAPS project was launched at the initiative of the Finnish Adult Education Association. In autumn 1998, the FAEA presented the grant amount by which it would be conceivable to design a developmental programme for the training of the entire teaching and planning staff in liberal adult education. This enterprise then assumed a three-part form. Each partition has, however, substantial tasks to perform.

- 1) On the initiative of the Ministry, a little over a year ago, the Finnish Adult Education Association launched discussion on a common vision for educational establishments engaged in liberal adult education. Broad dialogue within the field has been undertaken on various occasions as well as via the Internet. This exchange of views was set into motion through the aid of the booklet, *Kutsu vapaan sivistystyön vision rakentamistyöhön* (An Invitation to Build a Vision for Liberal Adult Education, LEAPS initiative for dialogue 1/1999). On the basis of feedback from the field, a more concrete vision-related document, *Vapaan sivistystyön visio 2005* (A Vision for Liberal Adult Education in 2005, LEAPS initiative for dialogue 2/2000), was produced. Field-based feedback has also been gathered for this publication, it is being further shaped and moulded on this foundation.
- 2) Research in liberal adult education has been minimal during the last few years. One purpose of the LEAPS programme has, in fact, been to invigorate investigation into the field. The activities of the research group can be found into on the FAEA home pages.
- 3) The development of personnel in the field may be regarded as one of the most pivotal partitions of the LEAPS programme. The area has not had its own teacher-training for quite some time. For the preservation of identity in this field, it was considered necessary to set up a channel for competency for those already in the field as well as for those aspiring towards it. In addition, the institutes in liberal adult education must also be developed as work communities. In addition to achieving further competency, there is an attempt to create study programmes which would enable comprehensive institutional development as an adjunct to individual studies. In autumn 2000, several trial projects will be launched in the form of institutional community studies.

List of used abbreviations:

LEAPS	Liberal Education for Adult Proficiency and Skills
FAEA	Finnish Adult Education Association

Björn Garefelt (based on material brought in by the project leaders)

THE FINJÁLA PROJECT

The Finjála Project studies popular education and the planning of projects. It is based on 5 themes: study circles, leadership, project theory, public-culture manifestations and popular education.

Students are supposed to take part in the planning of the 30-week course and decide how much time they want to spend at school and how many hours they want to study at home. Throughout the whole period, computer communication is essential for the 20 students, especially by means of "First Class", neuro-pedagogics, learning styles and working in "the real world".

The Finjála project leader course was carried out under the authority of Valla Folk High school.

The objectives of the project:

- To teach project theory, study circles, cultural programmes, leadership, and other popular education activities.
- To teach modern IT and distance study communication.
- To answer for today's need of popular education.
- To create meeting places and learning environments at the place of study and at other places the students have been assigned to.
- To take responsibility for one's own learning at home and to develop your project independently.
- To learn to see the difference between and to see the advantages of studying at school and at home.
- To learn how to organise, store, and work effectively with structures in a conference system.
- To pass on what you have learned to the actors at home.
- To learn about pedagogical structures, the handling of computer communication and techniques.
- To be trained in leadership and in organising groups and analyses in "reality".
- To participate in real assignments as the stick and the carrot to create motivation.
- To investigate whether we reach our goals most rationally through physical meetings, by way of First Class, via e-mail, on a home page, etc.?

The project was permeated by this outlook on mankind:

In our development list we have: popular education's outlook on mankind, the educational ideal and a massive dose of brain-based learning; all this to create tomorrow's independent popular educators. Co-determination and/or participatory guidance permeate all subjects and planning. This independence means taking responsibility for oneself and one's learning by the help of "learning tubes" = voluntary assignments with tangible consequences (for the possessor of the learning tube) if they are not carried through. Find your own desire to learn and get to know life-long learning by becoming familiar with your own talents, work and learning styles.





We applied opportunity-based methods, with a focus on the learning human being.

Pedagogical experiences we want to share

The quality of the physical meetings is not only about teaching subjects with the right methods, adjusted to the learning style of each individual. Physical meetings become the obvious "method" to teach what is not digitally teachable!

Meeting physically can create such a strong feeling of togetherness, that the feeling will last till the next physical meeting!

The message we work with is: We will have so much fun that we hardly notice we're learning!

It is here that the "de-programming of normal school thinking" can obtain effects when it comes to individuals taking their own responsibility. Each participant assumes his/her part of the role of the moderator. Each participant (and leader) finds his/her way to an agreeable development and to personal growth. Here we can develop what Gardner calls inter-personal talent, the most important competency in all leadership.

The physical meetings should gather the digital conversations, individual activities, as well as activities of small groups, to be put together in a tight, but festive framework which is absolutely voluntary. You do not want to lose them, but give priority to them, because it's a "party". All our participants have their own experiences of how digital activity is positively influenced by participating in physical meetings full of adventure.

The interplay between the very intensive and special boarding school activities and the "great solitude" at home is an important state of contrast and an important training.

It is important that you have plenty of time before the start of the course in order to:

- have a preparatory meeting for all who have applied and who fulfil the requirements, where work methods are discussed so the participants can "work correctly" from the beginning.
- have time for computer-based communication until decisions are reached who will be admitted.
- do one's WSA test in due time before the recruiting interview.
- start a mental process which will efficiently pave the way for the participant at the beginning of the course.

Participatory steering of education

The different phases of the course were discussed in a big group (physically and digitally). The jointly agreed-upon physical meetings and tasks, the previously planned field trips, as well as the schedule and contents for external participants, naturally reduce individualism. The process which many found awkward and difficult started with:

- 1) Information on the curriculum planned by the leaders.
- 2) Being "forced" to present your own needs, to argue in favour of them and finally to agree on goals, content, and methods, with specified dates.

- 3) Being "forced" to show consideration for your co-students' situation at home and their special learning needs.

This process recurred all through the course and became a constant challenge to meet when choosing between distance learning and class-room learning. What elements of individual work and group work respectively would class-room learning contain? How will I practice describing my own pedagogical needs and listening to my co-students' needs?

Examples of how to prepare the participants mentally for the largest subject: "Project"

To think in "projects" may take time to learn if you have never encountered one before!

Many people are unaccustomed to thinking about time limits, objectives, targets, contents, methods, schedules, and budget.

That's why we wanted to mentally prepare the participants from the beginning. We started with the learning tubes already during the introductory week.

(A learning tube is a task which I myself decide to accomplish, and which contains what is to be done, how I will do it, when it will be carried out, what the costs are, and how it went.)

We continued with recruiting, drawing up a curriculum, carrying it out etc., until the time for evaluation began.

Our aim was to rub the notions in: objective, contents, methods, schedule; and to apply these as a way of thinking during each phase.

We always think, more or less consciously, along these lines! Can we make use of what we already know (experiences) and consider as "unknown" what we seek to learn?

This is what our gentle start aimed at: mentally preparing a model which we could return to when working with new themes.

This way of working was new. It wasn't easy for everyone to take part and shift between course literature, other participants' experiences, one's own experiences, and then tie these together in written discussions on First Class. This was, however, possible for many of the participants who then served as models for the others. Thereby the participants had the possibility of learning this method of working and learning during the progress of the course with the help of various angles of approach to the eternal theme "give and take" = exchanging experiences.

The conference system First Class (FC)

An example of planning and carrying out a project, where the participants learned how to understand a computer conference programme and where we've taken different learning styles into consideration.



This is the way how we learned to work with it:

- 1) In a physical meeting we demonstrated and worked together on the computers how to contact each other, how to use a selection of functions on FC; rather traditional teaching with dialogue: instruct-show-do-ask-do.
- 2) Each participant got an FC floppy disc and a very well-planned manual describing the whole software installation procedure. (We'll send you one if you contact us!)
- 3) The participants return home, try it out, make mistakes and succeed.
- 4) During the next physical meeting we constructed an FC environment in our educational centre.



Each FC folder or conference = a room in the building. The participants walked to the different rooms in the building writing and reading messages. We "played" attach file, checked history and other important functions in First Class, with the objective of creating pictures and forming a comprehensive view of the digital tool FC. This method was especially important for the participants with a learning style that demands a comprehensive view and for those with visual/spatial and kinaesthetic intelligence.

FC is a very user-friendly program. All the participants have learned how to use the most common functions. It's the digital room which is "our real class-room".

IT and the individual

Group processes and the importance of creating close relations when you work with computer communication are essential for learning. Learning is the primary thing and the computer one of many tools. The telephone, the fax machine, spontaneous and planned meetings are other tools used in reaching learning success. The role of the moderator (the digital teacher) is to create the variety which optimises the opportunities of each participant to develop and learn. We have experimented with small groups who live close to each other and who meet, with leaders visiting participants at home, sending recorded cassettes, video material, and we have worked with personal growth meetings to assess each participant's needs.

Motivation for activity

Showing the participants the importance of taking responsibility for the planning of their learning, while we at the same time focus on project leader education as part of popular education, where the exchange of ideas is a principal ingredient, has been an extensive process.

The approach of the conference program (FC) "shows very clearly" when participants at a distance (IVL) are not taking part every day. The exchange of experiences, as opposed to physical meetings, comes to nothing if you don't respond and develop your own thoughts (= write) continually. In a study circle you can sit quietly but still share (70% of your communication is done by body language!).

The activity and the will to share one's experiences and to respond always increase after each physical meeting.

One of our absolute conclusions is that: Projects whose goals are set by the participants must offer physical meetings, where one can use all senses to share experiences, and where the people involved are given content and methods which are adjusted to each

work and learning style. For many participants it is in the end a question of de-programming ordinary school thinking.

The exception from this rule would be a more homogeneous group with a type of intelligence which is logical/mathematical + linguistic. (This group is however a resource in the physical meetings where its participants can share their way of thinking.)

Our greatest challenge in the time to come is to create more time and less time optimism.

Always something up your sleeve

To convince the participants not to "disappear" during the distance study periods is perhaps impossible, if at all necessary.

It has been shown that it is always possible to start communication in some way.

You have to find out the reason for the disappearance.

Our aim, as compared with schools for young people, is not to raise children but to create and sharpen tools for lifelong learning. It might well be justified if someone needs to do other things than being active on FC! But there is an etiquette to follow; you are part of a study group and your absence affects not only your own learning but also that of the others. Each absentee must be respected by the other group members.

Postcards, personal poems in the mail-box (for the ones who still read in the conference rooms), personal cassette recordings, video cassettes in the "green mail-box", *Secret Friend and *Eyeglasses Groups, where participants are activated to activate others, and the excellent telephone or the personal visit (Hi! Here we are. How's it going?)

*Secret Friend was used digitally so that everybody (a contact person allocated) could send anonymous (secret) confirmations to his/her known friend via FC; with encouragement and joyous acclamations.

The known friend does not know who has sent and this creates a particular curiosity and also gives the sender a certain amount of freedom. Technically we solved this by giving access to Secret Friend with the user name (hem.kom) and the password (hek).

*Eyeglasses Groups is what we called four different groups whose "eyeglasses" scrutinized one single phenomenon in the proposals for projects presented by the other participants. The Eyeglasses Groups scrutinized: advantage to society, relations to popular education, news value, and comprehensibility.

By focussing on one task the participants have a better opportunity to read through a longer plan without having to have opinions about more than one thing. We have experience in "activating participants" by greatly limiting larger tasks. Eventually analytic thinking will be developed so that the number of tasks for one text can be increased.





The Swedish-Finnish Folk High School

'If we make no mistakes we have not dared to do enough'

The Swedish-Finnish folk high school is situated in the very centre of Haparanda, in a large and beautiful old wooden building that housed a teachers' training college until the beginning of the seventies. The day I visit it, which is the first of December, it's a surprisingly mild day, warmer than in Stockholm and in the evening the rain washes away the last remains of snow on the road to the airport outside Luleå.

A week later the cold, if not the level of snow, has returned to normal and landed around minus fifteen degrees Celsius.

As far as IT (information technology) is concerned the Swedish-Finnish folk high school is well equipped with computer rooms, its own intranet and even a video-conference room - not unimportant an asset for a folk high school where e.g. the closest university is about five hundred kilometres away.

The Potato-plant

In the autumn of 1997 a distance learning project was started with participants from Säivis, a tiny village about thirty kilometres from Haparanda. They wanted to develop the folk high school pedagogy with the aid of IT. The name of the project became "the Potato-plant".

The idea for this project had been presented to the village council in the local authority during the spring and the representatives from Säivis were the ones that showed the most interest and this is why their village was chosen for the project.

- We could have recruited more broadly from other villages than Säivis, Anna-Karin Nyberg explains. She is a teacher at the folk high school and project co-ordinator for the "Potato-plant". But we think it was better to concentrate on a smaller group. We wanted to keep the ambitions at a reasonable level as far as the size was concerned.

Grab the opportunity....

Contrary to that they had great ambitions concerning the aim to develop the pedagogy with IT-support.

- We wanted to grab the opportunity to learn as much as possible, now that we had the chance, thanks to the extra funding we had received, says Anna-Karin. We also explained to the participants that this is an experimental project, that we would probably make a lot of mistakes and that this too was our intention. We wanted to stretch the limits, testing as we went along and not exclude any possibilities from the outset.
- Because you have to dare make mistakes. If you don't make any mistakes, then you have not dared enough.

Their own web-site

Out of the 101 inhabitants, sixteen signed up as participants, the youngest being 22 years old and the oldest 65. To ensure that they all would have access to computers and the Internet a computer was placed 'smack in the village' in a community room. In this project E-mail, fax, video, video-conference were also used. Their own study material was put on the folk high school's intranet (an internal part of the Internet) and created links to other material on the Internet.

The project was started in the autumn 1997 with basic computer training in word-processing, how to search for information and communicate with the aid of the computer, how to create home-pages on the Internet with a so-called html-code, etc.

The reason for including the html was that the participants wanted to create their own web-site to present their village.

One student in the maths group....

After the computer training the participants could choose subjects from the normal choice provided by the school. All the teachers at the folk high school were prepared to take part, depending on the choices made by the participants, also the teachers that were, if not opposed to, at least sceptical to or uninterested in computers. This was Marjatta Morin's case, she teaches maths and got an enthusiastic and mathematics-loving student from Sävis.

There was only one pupil in the 'maths group' but there could just as easily have been a number of mathematics-loving students from all over the country.

Keep-fit measures - at a distance

A sum of eight tutors (teachers) were engaged in the project. Every tutor could plan the tuition together with the group and, e.g. decide how much distance tutoring they wanted, how many physical meetings, what material to use etc. One of the groups for instance, didn't meet even once; another had ten meetings.

Other subjects chosen were data technology, Spanish, German, business administration and keep-fit measures. The last mentioned subject is perhaps not what you associate primarily with distance learning; neither was it self-evident for the people in Sävis or the Swedish-Finnish folk high school.

It became a popular course, never-the-less, which started with a physical meeting in the community hall. There they designed the study guide together with the tutor, Sari Angeria, a PT-teacher (Physical Training) among other things at the folk high school. The group decided to work out together twice a week and keep a log of the activities to show later to Sari.

They used the computer primarily to fetch information from different sources and from the folk high school's web-site, where Sari put factual information and issues for





discussion. On the other hand there wasn't much digital communication between the participants. This was partly due to the fact that they all came from the same village and hence could meet easily without any help from the Internet and partly because they had a fair amount of physical meetings.

Sari claims that the communication between the participants and between herself and the participants could have been much improved if they had used the First-Class-software, whose conference-system is well suited for discussions with more than two participants.

- It would, above all, have been easier to hold discussions if we all could have read all the commentaries. It turned out that people mostly tried sending each other E-mail messages, for fun.

The model used by the individual teacher for their groups worked more or less well. The best-functioning groups, according to Anna-Karin, were those where the teachers best considered the participants' wishes, demands and previous knowledge.

Pedagogical discussions

What has this project meant to the ordinary teaching at the folk high school? Those that have taken part in the project have regularly held briefings together with all the other teachers, also those that have not been very keen on IT-issues and everybody at the school have been informed about what was going on.

Anna-Karin claims that the project has had a major impact on the whole of the folk high school, also for those who have not taken part in the project. Among other things all the teachers have had IT-training.

- Most important were the important and interesting pedagogical discussions that the project led to between the teachers.
- Another result is that we today function more like tutors, Anna-Karin goes on. We work more with small groups and we have improved our flexibility, our ability to adapt the tuition to the needs of the students. This then leads to more independent students, they search for information on their own, they take more initiatives and dare do more.
- We also use our intranet to put the study material to our ordinary students, says Eivor Olofsson, director of the folk high school. All our students learn to use Word and the Internet during their first term, they get their own pass-word, their own E-mail address and their own file on our server for saving their documents.
- I think more consciously about how I express myself when I give assignments and such to put on our intranet, to make sure that they are comprehensible and function also when I'm not about, says Johanna Kostenniemi, IT-teacher. Johanna led one of the distance courses in Microsoft Word. She wrote among other things a new manual for beginners which is available at the school's intranet. It turned out so good that it even has been used outside the school.

Local and Global net - a popular education project with IT-support for village groups

The interest for rural development is greater today than it has been for a long time. This is why we started an IT-project, where we aim at offering active community groups in the country-side in the counties of Örebro and Värmland an opportunity to improve their competence in IT and distance communication, says Aulis Syväjärvi at Studieförbundet to explain why he took the initiative for the project "Local and Global net".

The intentions of the project were to offer opportunities for committed community groups to start IT-activities and distance communication from their own community centre or club house. They wanted to create activities that would lead to raising computer and new communication competence and give new ideas, nourishment and competence for propagating the issues of the future in their village. In the best possible outcome they'll sow the seeds for future distance work and learning in the village.



The name of the project hints at wider ambitions than just home-ground communication; made manifest in an environmental group in Brazil, Gaia, with whom it has contacts and which has taken part in the digital conferences.

- Offering this concept meant that communication and information to the rest of society were no further away than the local community centre. As popular educators and popular education associations we had a unique opportunity to offer a new vessel for knowledge and information as a complement to traditional bookish proficiency.

No need for pundits from outside....

The basic idea for the project was that no participant would need to go to town " to attend a course with others". The study circles were to be carried out at the local community centre with participants who know each other and with a trained monitor from the village. The computers needed were to be accessible in each village:

- We wanted all knowledge to be invested in the local village and that no pundits would come in from the outside, says Aulis.
- The key factor being that you didn't have to go into town in the evening. The actual situation being that most of the people are already working in town and don't want to stay there in the evening or drive back there. With this arrangement they could walk to the facilities and got to know each other even better in the village community in the bargain.

Great response

When the project started groups were contacted that had 'shown their paces' in some development or future project. After meeting a few such village groups they noted great interest and advertisements were then made for participants in the villages.



Rumours were also spreading about coming IT-activities in the community centres. The response was great with interest from all age groups and monitor training was arranged for around fifteen participants at Fellingsbro folk high school. Every monitor was trained to use the First-Class software which the groups were to use in their common electronic conference system. Through this program they also had access to the 'Ruralnet', an electronic network and conference system for rural communities.

Co-operation with schools

All in all five villages were engaged in the project and in each village one or more study circles were formed. They learnt general computer know-how and as they eventually felt up to it they started working with the Internet and also learnt First-Class to be able to take part in the electronic conferences, of which they also formed a part.

The computer hardware used was usually set up in the community centres where the participants gathered for their circle meetings.

- In one of the villages, Rockhammar, five different circles were formed which was too much for the community centre. An agreement was made with the village school, that was empty a couple of evenings in the week. We moved two of our computers there which the school could use in the daytime, whilst our circles could use the school's computers and facilities in the evenings.
- After the project twelve computers have been bought for the local association and a demand has been filed to have ISDN in the village! (ISDN is a technical means for quicker computer communication than the modem provides, it is not very well developed outside the larger cities, though.)

A distance circle

Within the project the groups learnt to handle new and modern information technology and also learnt computer communication. They were linked together through an electronic conference system where they could exchange with each other and the project management and where they were trained to communicate by means of the computer. Every circle met in the traditional manner, though, usually once a week.

One of the circles, on association charters and practices, also used distance studies together with the Felingsbro folk high school that wanted to test this subject with distance learning methodology and with one of its teachers as a monitor.

- One experience we made is that it takes time; what with presentation meetings, gatherings and the problems with facilities and technical solutions before the groups can start their own studies, says Aulis. The computer communication will come later when you have gone through the charm of novelty to word processing and general computer know-how.
- The technical problems that arise can be frustrating if there is no one in the village who knows anything about computers. But we have learnt that there are

more human resources than what is generally known. Young people are often very good with computers.

Wow!.... It works!

Did the project and the planning function according to plan?

- Yes, we can see quite clearly that activities have increased noticeably in the villages, ideas flow and new visions and issues have arisen, around which we are going to co-operate, Aulis explains. People have gathered around real local needs and have got new technology to their aid. This has been very positive.
- The interest in studies has also grown. We are going to start a writers' school over the Popular education network, to comply with demands from the villages.
- And the contacts with Gaia, the Brazilian ecological group, what did it do for the village communities in Sweden?
- Not much factual exchange, I shouldn't think, says Aulis. The most important was in the very experience of being able to communicate world-wide, even with people in the rain forests of Brazil, a feeling of "wow...it works!"

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Tollare Folk High School

"We wanted to make sure that the red flags would constantly glow in messages and conferences"

The day in the beginning of December that I visit the Tollare folk high school the school is draped in the whitest Christmas card snow, with the beautiful mansion at the centre. This could be somewhere in the countryside, far from the big cities, but the school is situated in one of Stockholm's suburbs near the straight of Skuru in the municipality of Nacka. "The suburb" was also the focal point for the distance learning course that was held 1997/98 funded by the KK-foundation.

"Suburban pedagogics for fiery spirits" (the Swedish. word eldsjäl/'fire spirit' has no equivalent in English, so I take the liberty of adding a new word to the rich English vocabulary. Transl. note)

was the name of the project that was carried out by the teachers Ronny Schueler and Staffan Hübinette. The course arose from the school's socio-pedagogical activities with, among other things a one year course in socio-pedagogical/educational socio-logical youth affairs for those people who want to work with socially marginalised youngsters.

To develop Tollare as a socio-pedagogical development centre they wanted to address the project developers and other 'fiery spirits' who are active in local transformation work in housing areas and similar projects. Since they wanted to reach participants who were active in their own projects during the course and also wanted to use these projects as a basis for the course, there were scarcely any alternatives to distance learning.



Idealistic 'fiery spirits'

The goal for "Suburban pedagogics for fiery spirits" was "to give the participants increased competence for project work and the necessary tools to guide the projects into sustainable transformation and social work as well as to create a network for projects and fiery spirits".

- The target group was more or less idealistic in associations and local council projects, Ronny Scheuler explains. They are curious and open people who burn for their cause and the thought has probably not even crossed their minds that they could have some kind of training.
- But they're often lonely in their role as leaders, too, with a great need for inspiration and sharing their experience with others.

The reason that they wanted to carry out this course as a project, Ronny and Staffan explain, was that they'd get much better opportunities to develop pedagogical ideas and methods with electronic tools, IT-support and at a distance. They also wanted to find ways to create positive inter-play between distance learning and local studies - while at the same time keeping the pedagogical hallmarks of popular education.

Distance as a prerequisite

All in all there were fourteen participants from Höör in the south to Umeå in the north. They had a sum of five meetings during four days during their course year; the first and the last at Tollare and the other three in different places where, among other things, they had field studies together in varying suburban areas.

Between meetings they kept in touch by means of the Popular Education Network (PEN).

- The distance learning design was the factor that turned them on, it was also a condition for holding the course at all, since the participants couldn't have studied while they went on working.

One condition was that they had access to computers and an Internet subscription. During their first meeting they were all trained to use the First-Class software.

Not possible to "teach"

The studies were based upon the participants' activities and on their experience. The projects they were working on were so to say hoisted into the course and became the principal basis for it. The literature that they studied was constantly contrasted to the praxis of the participants, each in their suburban projects.

- The idea was to do the things at our meetings that we couldn't do at a distance, Ronny and Staffan explain. Like taking part in study visits and meeting interesting people.

- Over the net we did those things that we didn't have to do when we met, like accounting for assignments, discuss each others' work, share experience etc.
- As teachers we became more and more tutors, who offered advice and points of view, who were bouncing planks for the participants. We were also responsible for nudging the participants forwards, to encourage, to stimulate and so to say make sure that there were red flags signalling messages and conferences.
- It wasn't possible to "teach", when we didn't have them in front of us, and this was good both for them and for us.

(The red flags are First-Class-markers telling you that there are new letters and items to discuss to read in mail-boxes and conferences.)

Written exercises are important

Not everything worked according to plan. There were, of course, some technical problems in the beginning, but a major problem was, perhaps, getting started with the writing.

- The participants were project managers, used to talking, but many of them found writing difficult, to find the time to sit down to formulate their thoughts. It's a pedagogical task in distance learning to explain that you don't have to write impeccably to take part in written conferences; it's more like seeing it as part of an oral discussion.
- We have learnt that we need a simple kind of written exercise at the beginning of distance studies.
- On the other hand the participants will get used to expressing themselves in writing, which will be an asset to them when they must formulate project plans and other similar stuff. This is an important fringe benefit of the course, together with the computer 'mileage' the participants will get.

The red flags....

Another problem was to keep pace on the net, making sure that "the red flags were constantly signalling messages and conferences".

- Round about Christmas the Internet went very quiet, Ronny explains. We then agreed that all, including ourselves, should write simple weekly reports about the projects and put them on the net. It became a major turning-point and all through the spring we were constantly kept up-to-date about events in the local projects.

One experience that Staffan and Ronny probably share with the majority of distance learning workers is that the communications on the net primarily took place during evenings and weekends.





- Our goal was that each contribution should have an answer within 24 hours, says Ronny, admitting at the same time this intention was not always kept.

Importance for the school?

Distance learning courses are really not new to Tollare, we have had them for a long time. But they have been more traditional courses where the teacher has kept in touch with the students by telephone and fax. After Ronny's and Staffan's project a general shift has been made to use computers and First-Class for distance learning.

- The interest in IT has grown at the school, thanks to the project, Ronny says. But so far it has not had any pedagogical impact on the longer courses, maybe it will come later....

Funding?

The course "Suburban pedagogics for fiery spirits" will continue this year too and the aim is to make it a yearly training. But there are problems....

- Primarily to find the time for two teachers to co-operate during the course, Staffan and Ronny say.

During the project year the twain could function as a teacher team, where both of them could take part in the meetings. But this year when they must function with ordinary funding, there is not enough time and they must take turns to assume responsibility for different parts of the course.

Half of them are still there....

What other differences are there, then, compared to the first project year?

- We haven't had any technical problems this year, despite the fact that we had more participants without any previous knowledge about computers as we started, Staffan says. But the first year we were beginners, too.
- The first year we, the teachers, were the most active in the conferences on the Popular education network, Ronny continues. But this too has changed in the second year.
- The first year the participants had a long list of reference books at the very beginning of the course. This year we made a better start, using their own work situation and their own experience as the starting point.

About half of the participants from the first year are still active on the Popular education network and we're just about to open a special conference for both present and former students.

Open Distance Learning with Disabled Students

Åsa folk high school in Sweden develops new educational methods to teach disabled students using open and distance learning. The students found out that they could change practices concerning disabled people, themselves, in their own environment. The disadvantaged became recognised experts in society in their own cause.

In our normal classroom teaching, we stress the creation of a warm atmosphere, the possibility for students to take part in course planning, an open dialogue between teacher and student and between students, and the importance of a process-oriented understanding of how knowledge is acquired.

Traditionally, these values have not been emphasised in distance learning. On the contrary, distance education has been organised around a written manual, guiding students through the course literature, with a rather passive teacher who guides a large number of students.

We began developing new methods using ODL because an important group of students could not attend our normal classroom education, for the simple reason that their disability did not permit them to follow a normal school day. People suffering from rheumatism often have problems getting ready in the morning. They need hours before they can start, and also long breaks during the day.

The first project focused on activation. There is a large group of young people suffering from rheumatism who do not have a fair chance of finding a place in the labour market. They risk permanent social isolation. Our aim was to develop a course with the goal of getting these people back into the labour market or, even better, into further studies. The course lasted for 4 ½ months starting with three days of normal classroom education, two distance periods, with a two-day meeting at the school in between and ending with a two-day final classroom seminar.

We studied Swedish (written language training), Computer Science (integrated with the language training) and Social Science (focusing on how the local democracy is organised and how disabled people can defend their own rights).

Three teachers and a librarian worked as a close team during the whole course. To secure a maximum of freedom and flexibility, we did not use any written manuals. The teachers guided the students online using First Class electronic conferences that permitted students to organise their time as they wished. If the teacher gave instructions in the afternoon, the students could work on their task in the middle of the night, if they wanted, and send their answers to the teacher whenever they wished.

The second project was really a natural second step for us and for the students. During the first project, we found out that our students were filled with anger and self-pity. They saw how laws and local regulations were changed so that it was suddenly more difficult for them to travel, to pay for a personal assistant, etc. In the classroom discussions their anger turned more and more into self-pity. "No one





helps us!", "The government and the local authorities are against us", "We, poor disabled people are left alone", and so on.

The teachers discussed this because we were angered by the self pity, and we decided to answer. "Why don't you do something yourselves? OK, you are disabled, but there is nothing wrong with your intellect!"

"Only small kids and very old people have the right to demand that other people solve their problems!" and so on.

From that on we had a tough time in our virtual classroom, but the students finally accepted the challenge. Unfortunately, at this point the project ended, though we understood that we could not leave the group like this.

Therefore, with our students, we planned a new distance course about the same length as the first. We called this course "Studies for democracy and change". Ten students from the first course continued and we recruited three more. In the first half of the new course, our goal was to make the students aware of the differences between how local democracy was formally organised, and how it worked in reality. If you want to change something in your local community, how do you act if you want to succeed? Who, in the structure of power, will be your allies and who will not and for what reasons?

In the second half of the course, starting with two days in the traditional classroom, we first let our students formulate what they personally wanted to see changed in order to live a better life. One group wanted to study how they could increase the accessibility of public buildings for people who are dependent on wheelchairs. They studied the American ADA law, which is far better than the Swedish law, and they went out asking restaurant owners and public offices how they arranged for people in wheelchairs to be able to enter the building etc. They found out that they could actually change the existing praxis: They could make the restaurant owner invest in what was needed by simply saying that they planned to write articles about their problems in the local newspaper. They could make public offices invest in accessibility by simply pointing out the text in the law or by quoting paragraphs in the local regulations.

Another group wanted to change the law that regulates the right to get personal assistance. They contacted the Ministry of Social Affairs, and suddenly found themselves part of a preliminary investigation preparing a new law.

We stressed very clearly that the course could only be the starting point for them in this process and that they had to carry on themselves after we finished the course and the project.

Increased self-confidence

The result after two projects was a number of young, disabled people who had acquired strong self-confidence. They had found out that they could actually change the world a bit and they were suddenly very strong.

Of course, not all groups achieved these results; not all students acquired a stronger self-confidence. Two groups more or less collapsed, due to illness or lack of motivation.

Working with disabled students in ODL gives you certain advantages. Disabled people are often socially isolated, and are quite interested in being active in distance conferences. Working the way we do, it is necessary to have a high degree of distance activity. Students who time after time enter an empty conference, soon lose interest and leave the course. We found that the "Distance Café", where our students could discuss whatever they wanted, was the centre of our virtual school. Our students opened their laptops several times every day to see what was new in the Café and after that they proceeded to the virtual classroom, the group rooms etc.

We also found that a high degree of teacher activity was important. To have a good dialogue in ODL takes teachers who are willing to be there when the students are there. If a student asks her teacher a question on Saturday morning, you cannot expect her to wait until Monday morning to have an answer.

A problem with disabled students (rheumatism) is that they suddenly get very ill, and can not study at all. They can be totally inactive for a week or two. Then you must be flexible enough to catch them when they come back to the classroom and define new goals for them. One thing that worked very well was to urge them to stay in the Café and to seek support from their fellow students until they could come back to the classroom. No matter how ill they were, they could stay in the virtual building and the risk of dropping out decreased. When working with this group of people, it is our experience that it is extremely important to take good care of each individual.

We did, of course, face problems. Group activities, depending on the students' own initiative, are extremely difficult to organise successfully. If the teachers leave the virtual arena, activity rapidly decreases. Students who lack self-confidence (low-educated, little experience of studying, disabled people who live in relative isolation) are extremely dependent on teacher initiatives and for these students it is often necessary to create a platform of self-confidence before they can start studying different subjects in an effective way. This can be done in a very free dialogue where the teachers role is to "see" the students, give positive feedback and make the student understand that he/she will be treated seriously.

Many ODL projects crash because the students (and the teachers) cannot cope with the technical problems you can face when using computers for distance communication. The risk is naturally even bigger when working with students who have no or little experience with computers or who do not believe they can handle a computer. We found it extremely important to use a technical platform for our communication that was very easy to learn and very easy to administer. For this reason, and because of its flexibility, we chose First Class. It is so simple that you can teach a student in one day, who has never before seen a computer, how to use it. It is, however, wise to be extremely careful and to let every student practice individually until you are quite certain that he/she can go home with the computer and be on the net the next day without your help.





Disabled people often need special technical solutions to be able to work with computers. They need a specially designed keyboard or mouse, etc. Working with students with rheumatism, we found out that if we used laptop computers with a touch pad, most of our students were satisfied and could work quite well.

Working with this group of disabled students has given us quite a lot. This was, for many of them, an effective way to break out of their social situation, and they have been very eager to communicate in our virtual rooms. It was quite easy to initiate and maintain the high degree of distance communication that is necessary for our model of ODL.

Our goal was to motivate the group to leave inactivity and isolation, to enter or return to the labour market or to proceed with further studies and to have the strength to solve their own problems. A majority of the students participating in these two projects are working or engaged in further studies today.

Five of them are in our third project, which is still running. Having the disability that our target group has, it is very difficult to go back to a normal job where you are expected to show up at the office at 8 and work hard all day until you go home at 5. Some of the students in our first two projects were quite skilled in drawing and painting and we had the idea that the artistically gifted people in our target group could possibly become web designers. You can work in your home; you can work as a freelancer.

When we planned this course (half-time distance studies for 51 weeks with 9 weeks full-time in the ordinary school classroom) we did not know of any complete education for web designers, and it was an attractive idea to be able to offer the most modern and sought after education in this country to young people who are disabled.

This education is quite high-class. Our aim is to educate professional web designers and already now (we have 18 weeks left) we can see that 5 or 6 of our 13 students will have the knowledge and skills necessary to compete as web designers on the market. For many of the others, their knowledge in web design will make them attractive for the labour market, but in other jobs.

AUSTRIA

Based on material brought in by Paul Kaspar (ed.)

6 OFL PROJECTS IN UPPER AUSTRIA

ACT

The training firm

The idea

The idea has its origin in Austria. Now it is a success story all over the world. Known as enterprise training office, "Musterkontor" or educational enterprise, Austria had always played a key role in this variety of the total learning environment.

What is it all about? We are talking about a model "close to the real-life economy", a practical element in education, particularly in business education. The roots may be traced back to the 17th century. The above mentioned "Musterkontor" or model office, set up in the commercial college in the days of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was already more than an experiment. The looks have changed: from over-sleeves, stand-up collars, inkpots and writing stands to blue jeans, monitors and computer networks. The idea is very much the same as ever, reducing the entrepreneurial risks by providing hands-on training for prospective business people.

Yesterday's risks have multiplied in today's world of trans- and multinational concerns, combines and corporations. If the training firm did not exist already, it would have to be invented nowadays.

Austria - the hub of the world

In relation to its size, Austria is a super power in the field of training firms. It is the first country to lay down training firm work in the curricula of Secondary Colleges for Business Administration and Secondary Business Schools. One full morning per week the class leaves the schoolhouse atmosphere and emerges in business life proceedings.

Small wonder that Austrian training firm know-how is very much in demand all over the world.

Renowned enterprises as partners for schools and colleges

Without co-operation of the economy there is no go. Some 80 per cent of the Austrian training firms have a partner in the economy. Renowned real-life enterprises assist the students in their training firm work: they sponsor office supplies and office technology or let them have their catalogues or samples. Or they invite the students





to their enterprise to show them around and take them through a day in their firm. Also highly welcome are the partner firms' employees: their know-how and counselling is invaluable.

Furnishing and equipping a training firm office with the latest office technology costs 1 million Austrian Shillings - per school, the equivalent of some Euro 80.000. Now the economy helps to maintain and build up on this basic investment. Sponsoring has already made a lot of investments come true.

Training firms at Austrian Schools:

1992/93:50

1996/97:300

1997/98:780

In addition there are also training firms in Austrian adult education institutions.

Austria is one step ahead

In Secondary Commercial Schools and Secondary Colleges for Business Administration, training firm modules are compulsory, which means that they are laid down in the curricula of schools. In other secondary schools with vocational training and colleges, they may be chosen as an additional programme. True, this form of open learning has little in common with encyclopaedic knowledge or the classical approach towards education. As a method of teaching and learning it is interdisciplinary and task-oriented. While in the office the students become employees of the training firm. Like in real business life, they have to apply for a position and then have to prove themselves in their jobs.

But if students simulate business, their teachers also have to change roles: The pedagogues turn into management consultants or business managers.

And teachers like their new roles: 90 per cent of all practice firm teachers say they would like to continue as trainers in the training firm.

There is little left of a typical school day

A training firm works like a real enterprise. Being present on the international market of training firms means constantly sustaining business relations with other practice enterprises. According to their line of business the staff will tackle all real life business cases - they will deal with supplies, marketing the products and services offered by the training firm or practice firm, push sales, do accounting tasks and take personnel management decisions and they have to cope with all the administrative and commercial craftsmanship one needs in a true business.

Like in real life, also a training firm has to pay attention to common business usage and the respective legal framework. Unlike in real life, the goods and services offered and the money implied in transactions do not really exist. What does happen is the exchange of information and papers that are relevant for the business transactions.

That is what is meant by virtual training with a "rescue net" that keeps "the trapeze artist from falling off the high-rope" and getting seriously hurt.

Learning by doing and daring

From the viewpoint of training the practice firm allows for true-to-business practice and professional and didactic reappraisal. This simulation of the economic reality supports the trainees' creativity, self-starting qualities, entrepreneur-ship, responsibility, teamwork, language skills - in a nutshell, those key qualifications that are also relevant for life-long learning. And it is beyond all doubt that life-long learning is what we will depend on in the future.

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Tasks in the training firm

- correspondence, using the most up-to-date software
- dealing with incoming mail
- filing
- using the telephone, the fax, the modem, internet
- working on the PC, using graphics software
- designing advertising media, like for instance catalogues
- preparing and giving presentations
- dealing with customers, suppliers, business partners
- purchasing and selling
- importing and exporting
- dispatch and customs clearance
- invoicing
- money transfers with domestic and foreign business partners
- banking business
- entering business cases into the books
- warehouse accounting and fixed assets accounting
- calculating wages, salaries and commissions
- cost accounting
- settling the accounts with the revenue office and the national health insurance
- hosting visitors and business partners
- other mercantile tasks

Some varieties of training firms

- as practice firms
- in adult education institutions
- in schools and colleges
- in medical rehabilitation
- as full time offices
- with three to five hours of operation per week
- in courses with lesson blocks



Where do they run training firms?

The practice firms can no longer be seen as an endemic phenomenon. The family of practice firms has grown together, has built up a small but self contained market economy, has established a truly world wide web of practice enterprises. There is vivid co-operation between the practice firms, both on the level of business contacts and in the pedagogical superstructure. Small wonder, that the European Union has shown great interest in supporting practice firm projects, first and foremost through the Leonardo da Vinci programme, but also through the TACIS-PCP strand for projects with our partners in the Central and Eastern Europe and the Socrates programme for practice firm student exchanges.

And then again, practice firms are not restricted to Europe. In virtually all five continents this training method is held in high - and ever growing - esteem. It has become daily routine to reply to e-mails from Brazil, to fax an inquiry to Canberra, to reply to some mail from Senegal and to pay for goods supplied from Russia. Here, too, the exchange of goods and services goes hand in hand with the exchange of teaching and training know-how.

In this way, a multitude of approaches and ideas is channelled for further exploitation and testing in this unparalleled model across-the-border training network.

The market leaders

Number of training firms in Europe:

Austria:	780
Germany:	600
the Czech Republic:	170
Denmark:	100
the Netherlands:	100
France:	100

Training firms on the upswing in ...

Australia, Hungary, Romania, Belgium, Ireland, Russia, Brazil, Italy, the Slovak Republic, Bulgaria, Latvia, Slovenia, Canada, Lithuania, Spain, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Great Britain, Poland, Switzerland, Greece, Portugal, the USA.

The booth at a fair is the highlight

Every year a number of European cities are the venue of training firm fairs. Participating in such a fair is the climax of the year: dealing with the logistics, choosing adequate means of publicity, decorating the stand - there is no difference to any other enterprise taking part in any other fair.

OPEN LEARNING

What is Open Learning?

Open Learning is:

- + a student centred form of learning
- + an alternative to frontal teaching
- + a challenge for teacher and pupil
- + a preparation for working independently
- + a training for team ability

How does Open Learning work?

In Open Learning:

- + certain tasks have to be fulfilled in a limited time span
- + everybody can decide by himself/herself what is studied and when
- + there is space for individual interests and needs
- + there is room for new media

What can Open Learning supply?

OL supplies:

- + independence
- + team spirit
- + having fun again with the material
- + larger scope of view
- + capacity to acquire knowledge
- + capacity for self control

Open Learning in practice

How I came across Open Learning

During several subject didactic seminars for Physics and Mathematics respectively, I was introduced to Open Learning and I wanted to know what this new form of learning is all about. So I designed an introduction to the pocket calculator as an Open Learning project for a third form of lower secondary grammar school. The success was overwhelming: weeks later on the open visiting day for parents they told me that these hours had been the most exciting mathematics classes the children had ever witnessed. The children were enthusiastic and - most important of all- they were able to use the pocket calculator very efficiently now.

So the result was overwhelming - but so was the work load of preparations (1 full week-end for 2 learning units)! In view of the not very favourable cost/benefit relation the Open Learning projects seemed to have died right then. I learned during the above mentioned seminars that Open Learning is already practised by a few teachers in Mathematics in lower secondary education, it is being tested in Physics by a handful of colleagues, but it has not yet entered the advanced level.

During the present school year I will be teaching Physics in two 7th forms and two 8th forms (differing school types, of course) of upper secondary education run by the





catholic communal authority of Linz (Upper Austria), additionally to Mathematics-lessons for one class and IT-lessons for another. Apart from one 6th form, the "standard"-lessons were quite satisfactory. A clarifying conversation with this class was intended to disclose the reason for their permanent unrest and frustration. It turned out that the main cause lay in the big differences in interest and performance of the students. The class combines natural science students (who will have to write their exams during the coming school year) with students from the artistic branch. Specific information for the "natural scientists" were not met with understanding from the part of the "draughtsmen" while intense exercises on a "basic level" for "draughtsmen" led to boredom among the "natural scientists".

I felt that the only way out of this dilemma was Open Learning, where the students decide for themselves when and how to elaborate and study which content. The work tasks can be differentiated according to core subject and "natural scientists only". The students can experiment by themselves and "comprehend" Physics and they can determine the degree of difficulty of Math-examples. Assessment issues can be adapted individually.

How does Open Learning work in practice?

The purpose of Open Learning is to allocate a working plan with work tasks to the students which they have to fulfil independently or in groups. The sequence of time and content is determined by each student. In the most simple version the work tasks, written on little work cards, are at the disposal of the teacher, and the individual students or the group can borrow them. It is fascinating to see how the students sit together and discuss problems and contents, run tests, support each other and really put their heart into it. A pleasant side effect is that the records kept in the exercise books look so much nicer and are more clearly laid out.

How to produce work cards efficiently

To prevent an enormous work load it is necessary to be very considerate when putting together the material for the lessons.

Surveys carried out by questionnaire showed clearly that the success of Open Learning is closely tied to a nice and, in terms of content, well structured design of the work cards.

The following points should be considered:

+ *A comprehensive overall concept for form and design*

A broadside format has its qualities. The appropriate document template in the word processing programme which is taking care of the formatting automatically, will do a great job here!

+ *Distribution of the subject on individual cards*

The subject can be divided on the cards in chapters. If work tasks consist only of a few words, the empty space can be filled with funny cartoons.

+ *How to go through the subject matter*

The spectrum reaches from tasks like "read page x in chapter y of the text book" to independent written statements, test instructions and exercises.

Various media can be included in the work order, e.g. newspaper articles, materials from the Internet, etc.

+ *What about students who finish their task too early?*

In such a case additional tasks or further information should be prepared, for example "portrait of a physicist": the students look independently for information about a certain physicist present in the chapter and design a page dedicated to him.

Open learning - Open assessment?

Assessment of the student's performance is a critical point. As long as work tasks lead to the completion of various things results can be presented and thus evaluated. But what about the studied matter? The following process has proved to be of practical value:

Each student must take a short oral exam about each card (or various cards). 2 - 4 students have to discuss the matter among themselves, afterwards they take the exam together. At the same time new versions of "exams" could be realised, e.g.:

- + Answering a question
- + Solving an arithmetical problem
- + Students put each other to a test
- + One student is present during the exam and assesses the answers
- + A physical science problem will be discussed in one group
- + An experiment has to be explained / demonstrated.

Apart from observing the collaboration which can be done very purposefully in Open Learning, a great number of individual achievements will result from all this after a while allowing a very differentiated assessment.

Assessment and records of achievement should be adapted to the teacher's individual system of grades. The most favourable version seems to be a system of points, for example 0-5 points for each achievement, the total sum of points is being evaluated.

Once Open Learning - always Open Learning?

Open Learning alone cannot solve all pedagogical problems. I feel that a reasonable mixture of various types of lessons is the best. Some chapters are most apt for independent self study while others simply require the professional information of the teacher!

DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING AS A FACTOR OF INTEGRATION BHAK STEYR

A test model for Open Learning in upper secondary education with the Commercial School of Steyr / Upper Austria as an example



Bad image, gloomy future prospects, social tensions within the class, extremely diverse levels of performance, resignation among the students, frustration among the teachers - the Commercial School is definitely in a state of crisis. Mainly in the bigger cities this once so attractive type of school is degenerating into a "residual" form. Especially in the first grades, with their many refugees from the polytechnics and the increase of foreign students whose native tongue is not German (over 20% in urban areas) the motivation of the teachers concerning their work is decreasing. A high degree of pedagogical-didactical qualification, especially in those classes, is absolutely necessary.



The Idea

In Steyr we asked ourselves: should we "muddle along" like before or "do something"? The starting position was favourable, a few years of "working out the relationships" in internal teacher- or supervision-groups had improved the communication among the teaching staff and heightened the sensibility regarding pedagogical necessities. The long lasting involvement of some colleagues in project work and the progressive educational approaches of the period between the two World Wars was an additional bonus. We liked the Dalton plan in particular. Developed in the USA in the Twenties by Helen Parkhurst, a student of Maria Montessori, it comprises 3 principles forming the foundation of this very open idea of learning: freedom, co-operation, independence. Why this approach was and is so appealing is the fact that it is both process-oriented and obviously attractive for senior pupils (secondary education grade 1 and grade 2).

It was clear from the beginning, that our concept needed an emphasis on social integration. We referred to a model published and correspondingly successfully practised in the early Eighties, "Community work in School" ("Gemeinwesenarbeit in der Schule", Neuhauser/Wascher). The main issues of this model based on Carl Rogers' person-oriented "philosophy" consists of open, little-structured work - within a class - with parents, teachers and students and of the comprehensive view of the school community related to that.

Before starting out to develop our own concept from the various ideas we were moving around a lot, visiting schools and talking to teachers who had dared to initiate changes in (their) schools. We found out rather soon that we had to explore new ground, since most of the models that seemed interesting to us were forms of lower secondary education, while vocational middle and upper secondary education was not mentioned at all. We were particularly impressed by vocational upper secondary schools in Holland and Denmark and we decided to develop our project, which is already in operation, in co-operation with them.

The first project draft was finished in Mai 1996, the team of teachers willing to join in was quickly found and a "test run" was envisaged for the school years 1996/97 in a 1st form at the Commercial school.



The model

The essential difference to traditional forms of teaching lies in the open learning phases (OLE-hours) supplementing the regular subject-related lesson and promoting self organised, self responsible learning. The number of OLE-hours (were the students decide freely on which subject they will work and when) was 8 hours a week for the model class during the previous year, with seven subjects (Religion, German, English, Business management, Accountancy, Biology and Geography). In a time span given by the teacher (planned work) a task has to be fulfilled independently, mainly by the method of explorative learning, with the help of prepared materials. That way a high degree of individually differentiated guidance can be given by the teacher present at the moment.

The class-council-hour where the class teacher or other teachers of the team meet all the students once a week, is an essential social-integrative measure. All possible requests and conflicts can be discussed there, the democratic culture of discussion is also being trained. The class council is moderated by the students who also keep the records.

The classroom as a self designed "positive learning environment" is another essential element of this study form. We were able to get parts of the hall and an adjoining store room as an additional work- and retreat-space for the students.

A central element of the "Steyr-model" are also the weekly or bi-weekly team-conferences of the teachers. These open meetings became an enormously positive power with respect to motivation and readiness to co-operate among the participating teachers.

In this context the parents' continuing collaboration, accompanying the project, should not be forgotten.

During two evenings per semester the parents had the possibility to take part actively in the new Commercial school-model. Surprisingly for us, this possibility of co-operation was used extensively. Parents' participation was never under 70%.

Targets

The "test year" was an enormous success - the students have learned a lot, not only on the content and subject specific level, but most of all on the social and individual level. We, the teachers, have also learned a lot. It was an immense thrust of motivation, conveying the desire for "more". Already during the first year the wish emerged (after prior consultation with the administration) to expand the OLE-classes on one hand and apply for a pilot project on the other.

The ulterior motive behind it: to test our subjective impressions by means of a well founded accompanying evaluation.

Since the beginning of the school year 1997/98 two pilot project classes with an expanded concept and - in co-operation with the University of Linz (Upper Austria)



- accompanying evaluation (action research) have been launched. The main task here is to test whether the targets formulated by us can be reached:
- + Education towards independent, self responsible work (learning by doing)
- + To convey so-called "dynamic abilities" which is what the economy always demands
- + Improvement of the learning process by stronger individual support causing a decrease of the drop-out rate and of students repeating the class
- + Improvement of social integration both among the disabled and among students whose native tongue is not German
- + Improvement of the motivation to learn
- + Contribution to the improvement of the Commercial School's image

After one and a half years of experience the full dynamics of the process that we started becomes visible. Despite the increased work load of preparations it is still a lot of fun to contribute to the shaping of your own school's reality. It also became evident that the applicability of our model is not exclusively limited to the Commercial School. On the contrary, since many colleagues who are teaching at the Commercial College as well, will start - at first individually and in small groups - to alter their lessons. Away from frontal lessons and more towards study forms where independence and self responsibility regarding the acquisition of the syllabus are in the centre.

This will not cause a decrease in the level of performance, which is what many people are afraid of. On the contrary, by decreasing social tensions in class and increasing guidance from the part of the teachers efficient learning is made possible for the students. Moreover, this type of learning enhances the equality of opportunities.

We must not forget that schools are not only supposed to convey the syllabus, they should also help the students to become mature and responsible human beings. In this sense open learning forms are an essential contribution towards carrying out the overall task of schools.

WorkStation -A MODEL FOR CO-OPERATIVE LEARNING

Draft to inform possible partners interested in the GRUNDTVIG-project
by Bifeb, St. Wolfgang, Upper Austria
March 2000

Introduction

The educational targets in vocational and enterprise related training are shifting from the reproductive acquisition of knowledge to the productive and independent process of activation of the learner. That way the frequently and quickly changing knowledge can be integrated more effectively and without much delay into the working life while promoting the capacities that enable us to establish and design independent changes and innovations. (The terms currently in fashion are: key competencies, self organi-

sation / self navigation, innovation, creativity etc.). In planning and developing continuing education measures more emphasis has to be laid on those capacities.

The current education models and instruments, especially the digitally supported media, indicate this direction:

Guiding and navigating texts, learning stations, (self)learning centres, multimedia learning environments, electronic networks or the internal enterprise model of the Change Lab®. Self steering and self responsibility are the central terms of this educational models that require a greater variety and integration of methods and media.

These new educational models can be used in various contexts, ranging from "autonomous" groups in adult education organising their own education programme to qualification measures in enterprises.



Purpose

The examples mentioned above are often too costly (e.g. the multimedia learning environment), some methods (like texts for practise and demonstration) are either too one-sided or not appropriate for adults in terms of didactics (like learning stations in schools). The WorkStation aims at using various formal and didactic approaches, combining them in a common model showing an increasing degree of self steering.

Flexibility

WorkStations can deal in particular with individual ways of learning. They facilitate co-operative learning and work, productive activities are central, they enforce self reflection and flexibility regarding radius, resources and place.

Independence

A WorkStation could be set up everywhere with the available means and competencies and for any target group, independent from previous knowledge and the degree of education.

WorkStation is a model:

- of openness (concerning approach, age, previous knowledge etc.)
- of self steering respectively self control (regarding the course of the studies / work, the co-operation, the control of the results etc.)
- of plurality (of the ways of learning / of materials / of media etc.)
- of individual guidance (by tutors)
- of social integration (by tutors, team work, group activity)
- of pre-structuring (of the study / work environment)
- of adaptability (to various contexts, to available resources, to institutional framework conditions)
- of reflexivity (regarding ways of learning, progress, results etc.)

Forms of the WorkStation

Station for learning and experiments



The starting position: co-workers of an educational institution / a project / a further education department prepare an open learning environment for others around a certain topic. They ensure the organisational framework conditions, accumulate contents (in as many media forms as possible), produce lists of content, overview grids, posters etc., contrive working methods, collect proposals for work, prepare short lectures about selected topics and devise a distinct principle of order for all these things. According to the conditions the WorkStation is either publicly submitted or offered internally to the co-workers in the building or enterprise. When a group gets together tutors introduce contents and process of the WorkStation. After that the participants themselves organise their way of learning (or together with others), they choose the contents and methods they consider useful to them, they choose places and working hours and sometimes they also examine the study results.

Development / modelling station

The aim is not the acquisition of knowledge about a certain content but the development and modelling of a concept or a product. The set up of such a WorkStation must contain other things: creative methods for "inventing" new ways.

Theory as a reference to practice

The theoretical background is not the primary concern of this model. It is essential to find a operable method of learning and working including as many degrees of freedom as possible. Emphasis is laid on tools for self navigated learning and working, some of the existing tools have to be adapted, new ones will have to be developed. The model has to prove itself in practice, it has to be useful in the most diverse contexts (utility viewpoint).

Here are a few catchwords concerning the theoretical foundations on which the learning environment can be set up. At the end of the project a report about the theoretical reflections will be put together.

- Today learning environments are mainly based on "situated learning", embedded in the concepts of the Cognitive theory and increasingly in concepts of "Constructivism".
- Multimedia learning environments represent the - mainly technical - realisation of these concepts.
- Self navigated learning / self organised learning / autonomous learning stresses mainly the individual and self determined traits (e.g. Ahlheim, Greif, Dohmen, Long, May, Simons and others).
- Other connections can be drawn to learning from experience and to instrumentalism (Kolb, Dewey, Illich, Vygotsky).
- Specific approaches like Engelström's Change Lab® are based on current ideas on the development of organisations.

Target groups for the WorkStations

The WorkStation model is relevant for institutions or departments of continuing edu-

cation supporting the idea of self determination / wishing to offer an additional alternative in their programmes / intending to establish an open study and work centre / wishing to standardise parts of their knowledge conveying etc. WorkStation can be an interesting alternative for the following kind of people: those who prefer to have their own way of learning and put together their own programme, who want to choose their learning partners by themselves; small groups developing a concept or drawing up a project who need instructions, formal designs, examples etc. Courses with a course leader can also use parts of the establishment of WorkStations for their purposes, for instance by integrating some learning stations into their programme or by being in charge of various instruments.

A WorkStation can be an invitation by an educational institute - just like any other function - for regular meetings. In that case people who probably don't know each other will meet. In the second variant an already assembled group (e.g. collaborators within a larger organisation) will communicate with the institution that offers WorkStations and will work out the framework conditions: space, time, media, materials, documents, a set of Learning stations, degree of tutorial guidance etc.

The group organises the work process in the WorkStation (dates for the plenum, work phases, form of communication and interaction, checking of result etc.), but it can also claim tutorial guidance or (invited) experts. When integrating WorkStations into an enterprise they can be either part of the fixed equipment (similar to Change Lab®) or a temporary continuing education programme. In both cases the direct reference to the workplace has to be taken into account.

A WorkStation can be realised in the following forms:

- as a function, lasting several days
- as a regular institution (with opening hours, with/without limited access)
- as a part of a (self) learning centre
- as a distance course with tele-tutoring
- as a mobile unit (for instance, a suitcase full of instruments)

LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION OF THE UPPER AUSTRIAN FOLK HIGH SCHOOLS / ENGLISH

Sprachenverbund der OÖ - Volkshochschulen / Englisch

Objective:

to establish a segment in the English Language Programme of the Upper Austrian Folk High Schools, thus ensuring for the participants:

- exams on defined levels in defined regions
- a systematic offer from beginners' level to perfection-courses, including certificates
- local mobility when participants change from one folk high school to another
- time mobility through individual and flexible course planning





However, a definition of study modules regarding the entrance- and exit-level as well as duration, learning materials and methods, is essential.

Project task:

- Development of a content oriented concept for an English language segment defining standards and meeting the above mentioned objectives:
 - + definition of learning-aim oriented offers
 - + definition of modules with entrance and exit levels
 - + definition of certificates (internal and external)
 - + elaboration of curricula
 - + elaboration of methodical and didactic possibilities
 - + choice of teaching materials (or of parts of them)
 - + definition of size and time duration of modules
 - + minimum and maximum number of participants
 - + necessary qualifications of the course leaders
- Formulation of the texts of the programme announcements on the basis of the folk high schools' need to ensure quality
- Elaboration of a concept for the successful implementation in the Upper Austrian folk high schools:
 - + detailed list of offers (when - where)
 - + description of space and technical preconditions
 - + plan for a preparatory and accompanying training for course leaders
- The form of contributions and payment are important parts of the whole project, as they are sometimes the responsibility of the respective agents. However, they are part of a supplementary project module without co-operation from course-leaders or external experts.

TUTOR TRAINING COURSE FOR SELF-LEARNING FORMS IN CONTINUING EDUCATION

Target group:

Adult education workers who are active in second chance education, involved as teachers, course leaders or trainers in projects and programmes of adult learning forms, who are interested in trying new ways of accompanied learning and self learning.

Institutions of training and further training interested in current forms of self organised and self steered (individualised) learning and in the further training of collaborators.

Teachers, course leaders and trainers seeking qualification as tutors for self monitored and self organised forms of learning.

Learning as "key qualification":

This idea of modern education positions the learner as an agent at the centre. Concepts of self steered learning, self organised learning and autodidactic learning



have been discussed, tested and successfully implemented in the last decades in the USA, Canada, Great Britain and Scandinavia. With the tutor-course we want to make an important step towards this direction. New didactic capacities are essential for the development of individualised continuing distance education and self study. Experts in accompanied learning are the tutors of self study forms and distance learning.

Tutors:

Tutors are study experts with special didactic abilities, supporting "learning how to learn". They are qualified in their domain, specially trained and have their own self learning experience. The tasks of the tutors who possess refined and reflecting linguistic and communicative competencies lie in the field of guidance and in the choice of appropriate communication forms. The tutors work on the following issues that are essential for self monitored learning.

Main issues of the programme / training:

- + How to take the initiative as a learner
- + What does it mean to be responsible for your own learning ?
- + How to develop practical instruments for self learning from your learning experience
- + How to treat learning difficulties as a challenge
- + How to develop a study plan and stick to it
- + How to reach learning aims by didactic and autodidactic activity
- + How can endurance and patience be enforced, how can we learn to tolerate double meaning
- + What are the capacities the learner has to develop to discover his/her own capacities? How can I adopt an explorative and critical view?
- + Can the learner choose between various and diverse learning strategies and learning tools?
- + How can the learner make a correct self assessment of his/her study successes / failures? What is your current position in your learning plan, how intense is your readiness to learn (motivation)? How to evaluate your previous knowledge and how to detect your own failures. Learning to assess where you lack knowledge (assessment and self assessment).
- + Is the student capable to formulate study aims and to act according to them in a task orientated way?

Forms of Tuition (Assessment / Advising / Counselling):

Written form: prepared texts, print outs and formats that are part of the learning and study material (Portfolio).

The support of study circles and study groups for specific targets (e.g. preparation for exams, exchange of learning experiences etc.) is essential in the social phases.

They can be initiated and accompanied by the tutors.

Implementation:

4 workshops, 3 days each - presence phase

3 distance phases / between the workshops (study partnerships guided by tutors

Objective: training for learning accompaniment

5. EXAMPLES FOR GOOD PRACTICE

ROMANIA

ROMANIA

Integrating professional policy into continuing education

Mihai Jigau (ed.)

CONTINUING TRAINING IN ROMANIA
and
PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION POLICY

General Framework of continuing training

The after '89 period in Romania induced not only changes in the economic, social and political field, but also in our area of interest, by modifying the general legal framework. A new Constitution was adopted in 1991, together with a Law of Education and, in 1993, a law regarding the accreditation of higher education' institutions.

However, the Law no.2/1972 is still valid. It specifies the obligation of state enterprises and administration to set up lifelong training courses. The provisions of the 1972 Law stipulate that "further vocational training of employers can develop within enterprises, central units, Ministries, other central bodies of the state administration, further training centres, research and design institutes, education units and other institutions and it can be achieved by:

- "inset-training under direct control of the manager;
- courses organised within the unit, outside the unit and in further training centres for employees;
- individual further training programmes sanctioned with a periodical checking of the assimilated knowledge;
- practice and specialisation stages in the respective unit or other units from the country or abroad;
- certification, after being employed, by an education unit including post-university education;
- a philosophical degree".

Even after 1989, this Law is still in function and there is no intention of replacing it with a new one with a special focus on/reference to continuing vocational education.

Therefore, most of the provisions for continuing vocational education are included in laws or decisions that regulate connected aspects (training, labour market, social field): social security, social protection for risk population, occupational integration of school leavers, re-qualification of unemployed and adult education (in general).

In the absence of a new law on permanent education and continuing training some legislative instruments have approached these issues from the standpoint of social protection and active employment measures.

Since the beginning of the 90s a legal framework has been established for social protection, professional reintegration for the unemployed, the setting up of centres for vocational training and retraining, the social and professional integration of handicapped people (including new protected jobs), protection measures concerning individual work contracts in the case of collective lay-offs (e.g. in the mining industry) etc. At the same time measures were taken to encourage companies to hire unemployed, young graduates or people with disabilities.

A draft law on the policy for under-privileged areas followed, establishing a favourable framework for regions with problems of economic and social nature and providing fiscal facilities for economic agents that make new investments in the respective areas (the draft is now under Parliamentary debate).

The analysis of legislation related to continuing vocational training indicates two major types of *training providers in Romania*:

- state providers, namely:
 - education institutions subordinated to the Ministry of Education;
 - centres of training, re-training and further training of unemployed organised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in 14 of 41 counties;
 - other training centres specific to certain departments and fields of activity;
- private providers: employers' confederation, trade union, foundations and non-profit NGOs, enterprises, the Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

Specific target groups are the following:

- school leavers and university graduates;
- long-term unemployed;
- women;
- handicapped persons.

Barriers to the enhancement of continuing vocational training:

- Only ¼ of the total number of unemployed took training or retraining courses
- Attendance rate of unemployed in continuing vocational training is very low
- Withdrawal rate is quite high

- The majority took training courses at the recommendation of Labour Offices (not on their own initiative)
- Only 26,7% of course participants succeeded in finding jobs, even in programmes organised by enterprises - no real job chances.

In conclusion, the constraints on continuing vocational training development in Romania are as follows:

- the lack of a coherent continuing vocational training policy - the programmes drawn and measures taken have a reactive character as they are adopted in times of crisis or only in the case of vulnerable populations;
- the lack of a specialised continuing vocational training legislation; the entire legal framework related to lifelong learning is ensured either by normative acts for other areas (e.g. initial education) or by disparate legislative articles focused on particular situations (unemployment, social protection of handicapped persons, professional integration of school leavers or university graduates);
- the incapacity of enterprises, especially small and medium ones, to invest in human resources; the precarious situation of state-owned enterprises and major economic agents in the context of a slow rate of privatisation all contribute to continuing vocational training not being taken into account;
- the lack of qualified training providers, prepared for the exigencies of pan-European competition and for top economic areas;
- the lack of appropriate institutional structures, adapted to meet the real needs of a changing economy; the absence of a system of evaluation and accrediting of training providers;
- insufficient co-ordination between continuing vocational training and initial training, especially at vocational school level;
- the absence of a community spirit and involvement of local actors which would encourage a community-based continuing vocational training;
- stress laid exclusively on the professional dimension of continuing vocational training, ignoring the citizenship and the social dimension; in transition countries, civic culture, active participation and political socialisation are aspects that cannot be disregarded in continuing vocational training programmes; more than that, economic democracy and political democracy are essentially inseparable.

New legislative initiatives regarding the continuing vocational training, under debate in the specialised commissions of the Romanian Parliament:

- Law on Lifelong Learning, submitted to Parliament in 1996, before the general elections in November 1996; it is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and Chamber of Commerce and Industry;
- Law on development of priority areas; this law is intended to provide fiscal facilities to enterprises in underprivileged areas; it was submitted to Parliament at the beginning of 1998;
- Law on continuing vocational training in educational institutions - this draft law was submitted to the Ministry of Education in July 1998; it is now under analysis at the other interested ministries.

In the spirit of this legislative initiative continuing vocational training is seen in a broader perspective, that of lifelong learning in which the vocational, cultural and citizenship dimensions are integrated in the form of unitary programmes, institutions and policies.

This wide network of continuing vocational training institutions would involve:

- Institutions of initial training, in the first place VET schools (especially pilot-schools included in the Phare VET Programme) and universities; both the provisions in the law of education and the existing facilities (qualified personnel, programmes and modern equipment, the possibility of awarding diplomas and certificates recognised by public and private institutions) are arguments in favour of setting up institutions for initial continuing vocational training; 'According to the study "Development of Permanent Education in Romania (Bucharest, National Council for the Financing of Higher Education, 1998), most Romanian universities already provide continuing vocational training programmes. Some of them have even set up continuing vocational training centres, such as EUROHOT (Centre of the Technical University of Constructions) in Bucharest, the Centre of Lifelong Learning (CEEC) of the Polytechnic University in Bucharest or the continuing vocational training Centre at the University of Medicine in Cluj.
- Popular universities, rural universities, parents' schools, cultural foundations and other adult education providers; for the time being, these institutions have developed spontaneously as they are focused on leisure activities; the draft law proposes that they become continuing vocational training institutions like similar institutions in Scandinavian countries;
- Continuing vocational training centres, organised in a broader perspective, on the basis of a proactive policy; these centres could be set up in any enterprise or company, in the public sector as well as in the private and associative one; continuing vocational training centres would not be limited exclusively to the situation of the unemployed as is currently the case.

In Romania, continuing vocational training is no longer considered only the responsibility of the Welfare-State. Gradually, along with the acceleration of privatisation and economic restructuring, the private and associative sectors are getting to be more and more involved in continuing vocational training.

At local level, social partnerships are the most active networks. In most cases, emerging training needs lead to the appearance of a spontaneous offer either through emergence of new structures (institutions, organisations, programmes), or through adjustment of already existing ones. More often than not, social partners are directly involved in continuing vocational training development on a local level.

An interesting example of local development is the network of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry. The network includes:

- county and national offices of the Register of Commerce;
- "Romanian School of Business" (active in 26 of the 41 administrative units in Romania);

- Chamber of Commerce and Industry affiliated to similar European Chambers.

At national level continuing vocational training is less organised and does not have a clear status.

In order to solve this issue, the National Agency for Employment and Training is now being set up. Controlled by an interdepartmental Governing Board (various central public institutions), including representatives of employers and major trade unions, the Agency will operate as of the beginning of 1999 and will have the following responsibilities:

- provide an institutional basis for social dialogue in the field of employment and vocational training;
- apply national policies of employment and vocational training.

With respect to involvement in continuing vocational training the Agency is intended to provide direct Services to interested persons, especially in the following directions:

- career-advising for the unemployment;
- vocational re-conversion of personnel in enterprises undergoing restructuring so as to prevent unemployment situations.

Noteworthy is the fact that the National Agency for Employment and Vocational Training has in view the involvement of social partners at both local and national level.

Another structure of interest for continuing vocational training is the National Council for Adult Training. At present the draft law on this new continuing vocational training structure is under debate in the Romanian Parliament. Note that the Council will operate as a tripartite structure (Government, employers, and trade unions). According to the draft law under debate the Council will have the following responsibilities:

- prepare initiatives for changing legislation related to vocational training;
- draw up studies and analyses on vocational training;
- approve standard criteria on which vocational training programmes will be based;
- develop a dialogue with public authorities (central and local) and civil society on vocational training issues;
- approve the operation methodology of training providers (define criteria of accreditation and certification);
- contribute to large-scale application of occupational standards elaborated by the Council of Occupational Standards and Evaluation (COSA).

Employment measures and professional integration policy

Active employment measures considered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare consist in: vocational training courses, information and mediation services,

low-interest loans for companies which create jobs and hire unemployed people in certain proportions etc. Workers whose individual labour contract has been discontinued following collective redundancies do also benefit of income tax exemptions (in case they are self-employed), vocational counselling and job clubs, business start-up support, entrepreneurial training, public work programmes, services of business incubators, etc. Unfortunately, the active employment measures of the Government have not proved their efficiency so far in terms of labour market impact, thus requiring a major overhaul of institutional make-up and implementation mechanisms.

The National Agency for Employment and Training, as a public institution with tripartite administration, whose objectives consist in: institutionalisation of social dialogue on the matter, implementation of employment policies, vocational training and social protection of the unemployed. The Agency will administer the Unemployment fund, the main financing source of the active and passive employment-related provisions mentioned above, besides the extra-budgetary funds mobilised by international donors (notably the European Union and the World Bank).

Active policies are materialised mainly through vocational training programmes (training, retraining, further training courses or other forms of training for the benefit of unemployed and employed alike), information, advising and consultancy and mediating services as well as various other approaches meant to provide new jobs: subsidies, fiscal and social tax exemption, bonuses, credits with low interest rates, etc. Other measures are designed for the re-orientation and re-integration of the unemployed resulting from the restructuring of major non-profitable enterprises.

Passive employment policies comprise: unemployment benefits and support allowances, labour market entry aid (similar to the unemployment benefit granted to young graduates of higher, high-school, vocational and apprenticeship education) and compensations in case of collective lay-offs.

The actual recipients of *professional integration aid*, as a form of social protection, are:

- graduates of secondary and higher schools who failed to find employment within 60 days of graduation;
- young recruits with no labour market experience who could not find a job within 30 days of completing their compulsory military service;
- graduates of special schools for the disabled who are unemployed.

Young people who are not able to find a job in the period when they receive professional integration aid continue to receive a support allowance.

Recipients of the unemployment benefit, support allowance or labour market entry programme may take training, re-training, further training courses or other forms of vocational training the costs of which are financed by the unemployment fund. As long as one is the recipient of unemployment benefit, support allowance or the labour market entry programme and takes a training course, one may also claim the state child allowance for one's child(ren), and is entitled to free medical care for oneself and the family, etc.

Labour employment regulations provide that part of the unemployment fund may be used to give low-interest loans to new or existing small and medium-sized enterprises involved in production, the service and tourist industries, and in general to enterprises and companies providing new jobs. This is the manner in which in 1996, approx. 20 thousand new jobs were created of which over 50% were allotted for the unemployed. Moreover, economic agents are encouraged to employ young pre-university and university graduates by supporting their salaries through the unemployment fund. These provisions also include handicapped graduates in the case of which the subsidy period is longer (18 months compared to the regular 12). Over 40 thousand young people have benefited from this provision in the past few years. The same ordinance stipulates new incentives for enterprises that employ young graduates, including the handicapped.

Training holds an important place in active employment policies. Training, re-training, further training or other programmes are provided for people who are working or are out of work. In 1997 40.391 people graduated training courses, by the end of 1998: 36.992 people. The respective figures are insufficient taking into account the rapid changes in economy (including the range of professions) in general and on the Romanian market in particular, now undergoing a process of restructuring, adjustment, adaptation and attempting to align to the economy of developed countries. In the aforementioned interval of time the main jobs for which training courses were organised are: computer operator, accountant, car mechanic, textile ready-to-wear worker, cook, hairdresser, etc.

In 1997 40,4% of the total number of (re)training courses were for the unemployed and the share of those subsequently employed (out of the total number of trainees) was only 13.3% (in 1998, until September 30th - only 10.9%). This last aspect draws attention to the low efficiency of training programmes, materialised in the low number of persons who succeed in finding employment after graduating in the various training, retraining and further training courses, to the lack of communication between labour demand expressed by economic agents and the training offers.

From 1991-97 there was a shift of emphasis from passive to active programmes. In 1997 the right premises were created to ensure that more attention is paid to population categories with higher unemployment risks: youth, women, handicapped persons, persons with a low level of qualification, narrow qualification or trained for a job not in demand on the labour market. In this sense the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare proposed new regulations related to employment measures:

- reducing the contribution to the unemployment fund to 3.5 per cent (from 5.0 per cent) for job-creating businesses;
- exempting legal entities from their contribution to the unemployment fund in exchange for hiring as many young people, single parents with under-age children and long-term unemployed as account for at least ten per cent of their total labour force;
- exempting employers who hire graduates within a year of graduation of their contribution to the unemployment fund;

- paying the 27-month unemployment benefit in advance to landholding unemployed who move into rural areas;
- financing the training costs for the unemployed who are by law ineligible for unemployment benefits;
- paying the costs of a second (re)training programme for the unemployed who have exhausted their unemployment benefit on condition that they do have a chance to get a job.

The 1997-2000 Government Programme will focus on developing a legal and institutional framework apt to promote employment and active labour employment policies with a more important role attached to training. In this sense a law was passed on the establishment, organisation and operation of the National Agency for Professional Employment and Training (ANOFP). The purpose of this agency is to organise and coordinate, at a national level, labour employment and training activities as well as protection for people without jobs. The agency has branches in each county as well as in Bucharest.

The objectives of ANOFP, which will become operational at the beginning of 1999, are the following:

- institutionalisation of social dialogue in vocational training;
- application of vocational training strategies;
- application of social protection measures for the jobless.

The main responsibilities of ANOFP:

- providing employment services;
- providing and financing professional training services according to the demands of the labour market;
- providing career guidance for the jobless and acting as a mediator between them and employers;
- administrating the budget of the unemployment fund etc.

The involvement of social partners in the administration of the unemployment fund will render the employment measures better suited to the local labour market demand, considerably diversified and closer to the people on the ground. Besides its tripartite dimension, the innovation consists also in the possibility provided to the Agency of contracting out services to local suppliers (public and private) able to provide specialised active employment measures in line with the labour market requirements.

In the same context mention must also be made of the Law on the setting up, organisation and operation of the National Board for Adult Vocational Training, an administrative authority playing an advisory role in the promotion of adult vocational training policies and strategies, established in a tripartite System (representatives of the central public administration, employers' organisations and trade unions). CNFPA has the following attributions:

- to approve drafts of normative acts related to vocational training and propose projects in the field;
- to draw up vocational training studies and analyses,

- to elaborate recommendations on the standard criteria for drawing up vocational training programmes
- to elaborate recommendations on methodology, criteria of authorisation for providers of vocational training services,
- to promote the use of western standards created by the Board of Employment Standards and Evaluation.

The downward trend in birth rate has been accentuated over the past years, consequent to the change in population policy with a stop being put on forced pro-birth measures and the liberalisation of abortion, but also due to the impact and repercussions of the transition to a market economy on demographic phenomena.

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Should the current trends of fertility and mortality be maintained it is estimated that in approximately a decade this will result in a 2% fall in the total population count, and implicitly to a fall in school age and young population in the 15-29 years age group, while at the same time it will bring about an increase in the adult and elderly population. This situation will undoubtedly have repercussions on the percentage of the economically active population as against the total population of the country and will raise problems concerning the possibility of sustenance of the new economically active population. The economic dependency ratio has increased from 1.12 in 1990 to 1.39 in 1996. It should be mentioned however, in the same order of ideas, that since the beginning of 1997 more people have been retired than employed.

It should be noted that there has been a continuous fall in percentages for the economically active population - as a result not only of the evolution of demographic phenomena - the ageing of the population - but mostly due to a reduction in the capacity of absorption of the economy. From 1990 to 1996, the economically active population fell and the number of employees decreased, their percentage as against the economically active civil population going down from 75.1% in 1990 to 62,8 in 1996.

The structure of the economically active population by educational level shows that almost 2/3 of the total is represented by recipients of secondary or higher education. This situation indicates that the work force in Romania is highly qualified. Taking the age criteria into consideration, the highest level of training (post graduate compulsory education) corresponds to the 25-34 years age group (90.3%) and the 35-49 years age group (72%).

After 1990, the work force has undergone a series of structural changes. Thus, on labour dynamics by economic sectors, the following may be said:

- The percentage of the economically active population in agriculture has grown steadily from 1990 to 1996. The process has been accompanied by an increased number of women and elderly people involved in this sector; this can be explained as a consequence of land distribution but also as a consequence of high unemployment in towns and cities; from 1997 there is a slight decrease in population involved in this sector but the level still remains high.
- In industry and construction the percentage of the economically active population has fallen from over 43% in 1990 to under a third of the total, as a result of

economic recession, restructuring and group lay-offs.

- The percentage of the population in the service sector registered a general positive growth but is still reduced; in 1998 it represents approximately 1/3 of the total of the economically active population. The branch with the largest development and the largest proportion of work force is trade.

CONCLUSIONS

1. It is difficult to do a follow-up of the employment process in the case of young graduates. On one hand, schools do not have explicit responsibilities in supervising the situation of students after they graduate (in the near future, however, educational units at pre-university level will start a process of self-evaluation and evaluation, one of the criteria being the external efficiency of schools). On the other hand, the county General Directorates of Labour and Social Welfare and the Labour Force and Unemployment Offices have information only on the number of graduates who benefit by social welfare measures, passive and active employment measures. These measures include employment allowance, support allowance and a subsidy for a quantum of their salary if employed by various economic agents. In principle, it might be considered that the other graduates have found employment on the labour market. Actually, the information is distorted because:
 - Some graduates, while receiving the employment allowance, have a temporary job ("moonlighter", without labour card or employment contract for a limited period of time);
 - Other graduates continue their studies at higher educational levels or do their military service;
 - Some of them delay registering at the Labour and Unemployment Offices although they have not found any employment;
 - Finally, a certain percentage cannot benefit by the employment allowance either because they are not yet 18 years of age or because they have not passed their final examinations.
2. It is an indisputable fact, however, that the employment of graduates of various forms of initial vocational training - beginning with graduates of vocational schools and ending with those of higher education - is a phenomenon that has become chronic. It tends to get even worse and has powerful repercussions on economic and social development, on human resources training, on education demand and motivation for continuing education.
3. The constant pressure of new generations of graduates, entering the labour market for the first time, on the balance between offer and demand of qualified labour goes back a long way (lingering since before 1990) and has the most diverse explanations:
 - The shift from the system of compulsory administrative distribution of graduates - which in fact did not work out properly - to the free market system, of adjustment according to the needs and conditions of the market, the offer and demand of qualification. In the absence of minimum conditions for a normal functioning of such a system, there have been disruptions, some unbalances have deepened, and new ones have emerged. Year after year,

approximately 30-35% of the legions of graduates of various forms of training do not find jobs appropriate to their qualification; the strongest pressure is felt in the case of High school graduates followed by those of vocational schools.

- The prolonged decline of the national economy associated with phenomena of social, cultural, moral, educational crises, etc resulting in a continuing reduction of labour force demand. The loss of jobs has concentrated in certain areas of activity, mainly in the processing industry and in certain professional and geographical areas.
- The modest capacity, often decreasing, of the private sector of small and medium enterprises to create and maintain jobs. This sector is still far from "compensating" the net losses of jobs from the state sector,
- The fragile link between the predictable evolution on the labour market and the qualification offer of the system of education and vocational training which, in the period we are referring to with the exception, maybe, of higher education, has functioned more or less on inherited structures. The effects of the pre-university education reform (a reform sustained by the Phare-VET RO 9405 programme) will be better outlined in the years to come. Under the circumstances, the offer of the system of education and vocational training tends to move away from the current labour force demand, a situation that generates difficulties for the employment of graduates.
- Reduced professional mobility. There are still major weaknesses in the system of continuing training which is insufficiently controlled.
- The quality of the training of graduates is deficient especially regarding practical skills and behaviour. This deficiency is even more apparent if the enterprise cannot (or is not willing to) make additional investments for integrating graduates with positive results.
- Mentalities and attitudes inappropriate to the labour market. They refer equally to economic agents, graduates, and social partners and sometimes even to providers or employment services. Among them we should mention: conservatism in the configuration of occupational-professional categories; strong reticence in employing young people; breaks in the links between school (university) and enterprise (economic and social environment); the refusal of certain jobs for various reasons (salary level, work and social conditions, etc.) especially in the private sector; the gap between aspirations - labour market demand - educational offer with emphasis on its flexibility and capacity to adjust to the dynamic evolution of the labour force market, etc.

4. All the above lead to unemployment in the case of young graduates, even long-term unemployment and exclusion. Unfortunately, at least so far, long-term unemployed - young or adults - or young unemployed, in general, do not constitute a priority group for continuing vocational training in Romania. There are no special programmes devised for these persons, nor is there the possibility of the state financing their vocational training when their right to an allowance ends for lack of adjustment of the legislation. In the case of young people the respective phenomenon has obvious negative effects, even more serious than for other age categories, because it:

- reduces motivation and implicitly the chances of finding a job;

- generates discouragement and social rejection feelings;
 - leads to a loss of work skills and of the discipline required to carry out a systematic activity;
 - increases the risk of maladjustment even if available jobs appear on the labour market.
5. In Romania, so far, there has been no systematic preoccupation at all levels with *all* factors involved for the purpose of rapid and efficient employment of graduates. Moreover, studies on this theme are sporadic and of recent date. In the future, probably, such studies will hold a greater share and will become an efficient mechanism of adjusting economic and social demand for education and training to the evolution of the labour market.

List of used abbreviations:

ANOPF	National Agency for Professional Employment and Training
CNFPA	National Board of Adult Vocational Training

The development and use of IT courses for creating an open and flexible student-centred environment

Miroslav Babinský (ed.)

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Virtual university with nation wide operation

Distance education in Slovakia has a very short tradition since 1990 when the City University Bratislava, a branch of the Open University, UK, was established. As response of the government to the challenge of the Phare multi-country programme Co-operation in distance education, the National Centre for Distance Education (NCDE) was established in 1994 and in 1996 the Slovak Network of Distance Education was created as an association of universities providing distance education. In 1999 with over 2500 students in 32 courses it became one of the major providers of open distance learning in Slovakia.

Courses were developed as paper based learning materials with video or audio support. Taking into account that in 1999 Internet was accessible in 72 Slovak towns and that all universities, 131 high schools and 19 primary school were connected while ISDN/ATM as a means for videoconferencing was still not very widely used we decided to employ web technologies for delivery. The first courses with web delivery: "Energy and Environment", "The Quality of Chemical Measurement and Chemical Meteorology" were provided in 1999. At the same time the National Centre provided in licence agreement the web based course "Learning about Open Learning" which has been developed by the Herriot Watt University in Scotland and was aimed at those who provide distance learning courses and want to employ new technologies.

Activities of members of the DE network in the field were focused on searching for appropriate partners for providing web education. One of the initiatives, called "Distance Learning through the Internet at the Slovak Universities", approved and financially sponsored by the Open Society Foundation for the years 1999-2001, was initiated by the NCDE.

The project will be implemented in co-operation with the Open Society Foundation (NOS-OSF) and the Slovak Ministry of Education (ME).

- NCDE will provide technical equipment (server for a Virtual Library) and professional knowledge necessary for its administration
- NOS-OSF will financially support the project and co-ordinate it for the first two years
- ME will provide connection from the server to the Internet, official project

promotion and help and support in obtaining accreditation of newly introduced distance learning courses.

The project objectives are:

- to spread knowledge about modern forms of distance learning
- to support expansion of distance learning towards forms that apply to the Internet
- to support extensive university studies with forms that apply to the Internet as a complete part of education
- to help this means of education to find its way into the humanities where the situation is worse due to insufficient equipment and a lower preparation level of the people using the information and communication tools.

Project management

Professional committee, which would solve operative issues and approve all financial decisions.

Types of project activities

1. Creation and development of Virtual Library for university courses
2. Development of Internet-based distance courses to be derived from the most successful courses in the Virtual Library
3. Organisation of distance education courses on Internet distance education, training and workshops for future authors, tutors and managers in the field
4. Introducing a small grant programme to support already existing supplementary activities such as multimedia CD's, correspondence seminars, etc.
5. Participation in strategy development in the field - co-operation with the Ministry of Education, Network of Distance Education Centres, universities which are involved in the distance learning project

Detailed description of activities

1. Establishing the Virtual Library of university courses.

A competition aimed at university teachers will be announced dealing with providing teaching materials for the Library server (at the beginning the competition will be open just to chosen "pilot" subjects).

A teacher, after submitting his/her materials will receive a registration and the possibility of becoming a member of the evaluating team and will get the opportunity to review courses developed by other teachers (peer review). All reviews and evaluating reports will be available on the server.

The visitors of the server will also have the opportunity to evaluate the quality of materials.

The project committee may also ask independent experts from the Czech Republic to provide their views and evaluations.

On the basis of these reviews and evaluations the commission will choose the most successful courses. Criteria and results will be available on the server.

Authors (and their departments/institutions) of the most successful courses will be awarded with grants covering academic trips abroad, purchasing literature, and department development in general. Then they may receive another grant to rebuild a course into an Internet-based distance course. The grant would be aimed mainly at covering the costs of work for rebuilding the course.

2. Development of Internet-based distance courses on the basis of the most successful courses from the Virtual Library

Grants for implementing Internet-based distance courses will be offered directly to the authors of the most successful courses from the Virtual Library. Charges for development and technical work connected with the creation of a course will be the major part of the grants.

3. Organisation of distance learning courses within the Internet distance education, training and workshops for future authors, tutors and managers in the field

We would like to initialise and will begin support distance education courses, training, workshops for future authors, tutors and managers in the field of Internet distance education in co-operation with the Slovak Network for Distance Education.

4. Small grant programme for already existing/implemented supplementary activities such as multimedia CD's, correspondence seminars, etc.

Small grant programme for supplementary activities will support and develop already existing/implemented activities quickly and effectively. On the other side, an open grant programme in this field can bring many new ideas and improvements that may be used for future programme developments.

The small grants can also include supporting activities that are not necessarily university courses, such as correspondence seminars for secondary schools or preparation courses for entering exams to universities, etc.

List of used abbreviations:

ISDN/ATM	Means for quicker computer communication via modem
NCDE	National Centre for Distance Education
ME	Ministry of Education

Proposal of a standard of written material

Wojciech Gilewski

A proposed standard of OFL written materials Standard elements of written book

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Module structure

It is proposed to divide the full OFL learning material into a certain number of modules. Each module can be studied separately if a student is sufficiently prepared to study it. At the beginning of each module it is precisely defined what should be known to start studying. After 5 years of experience in various fields, from languages to mathematics, from history to physics, from subjects at secondary school to OFL materials for university students, we would like to propose a universal standard of written materials as well as for the electronic book.

Components of the text of each module

1. Title

The title should be short but enough to show what the module is about.

2. Content

The content pages tells the students what topics are covered in the text, giving them a broad view of the material which follows. After reading the content a student should know if he knows, or has heard about the subjects included in the module.

3. Introduction

The introduction has the important job of motivating students and arousing their interest, as well as presenting all or some of the contents page, from a different perspective. The important part of the introduction is a list of references and learning materials.

4. Objectives

Objectives tell students what they will be able to do when they have completed the work in the section, and they present the topics in a new form. This is the most important chapter in the module. Some remarks on the writing objectives are presented later.

5. Key words

A list of main terms of the module in chronological form. The key words are explained at the end of the module.

6. Lessons

The standard text of the module, divided into lessons (usually 4-5 per module).

7. Examples of assessments

Examples of assessments could help the students to repeat the learning material. Usually there are no answers for the questions in this chapter.

8. Answers for self assessment questions

Answers for self assessment questions present a review of the text, showing students which areas of the work they have understood and absorbed and which areas they have to go over again.

9. Explanation of key words

Explanation of key words in alphabetic order.

To motivate the students to work there are several activities (with some signs in the text) for them in the text. Some of them are listed below:

Questions

Easy questions with a "window" for the answer. These are questions to not allow the student to fall asleep while reading the module. The answer is usually in the text above.

Activity questions

Similar questions with a "window". It is necessary to do some activities to answer the activity question.

Self assessment questions (SAQ)

The most important questions, with a "window" and with the answer at the end of the module.

Reading, references

Request to read something from a source other than the module.

Quiz, Test

Usual methods for assessing students.

Assessment

The assessment should be a written work presented to the tutor as a proof of the progress in learning.

Examples

Standard examples for textbooks.

Video, audio

Call for video or audio supporting learning material. Usually it is not necessary to see or hear the whole cassette, but only a part.

Group work

For some problems it is worth to advise the student to get in contact with others.

Discussion with tutor

Difficult, problem questions can be discussed with the tutor.

The questions mentioned above (or others) cover the most important factors of the open flexible learning material.

Instructional design for learning materials

Let's make sure that you have a clear idea what instructional design is. Can you write a brief definition ? (you can look into "Material design and delivery modes" in the manual).

Instructional design is the term used for teaching methodology in learning materials, and it includes everything that helps the students to learn. The term derives from the use of the word "instruction" instead of "teaching".

It is helpful to think of instructional design as being applied to learning materials in three stages, or levels:

- Design of the course structure, at the planning stage;
- Design for the development of the structure, at the writing stage;
- Design for the production of the text, at the editing stage.

To keep this as clear as possible, it will be useful to refer to the planning level of instructional design, the development level and the production level, corresponding to the stages at which the instructional design activity takes place.

Three levels of instructional design

Level 1: planning the structure of the course.

First, at the planning stage, the structure is established in the sequence of topics, and the headings and subheadings for each topic. This is the same process as you would use for any course design in teaching. You are answering the questions: what topics do I need to teach, and in what order ?

Level 2: the development phase of instructional design.

At the development stage the writer, technical reviewer and the instructional designer collaborate to develop the sequence of topics and methods of teaching for each topic. This is exactly what you do when teaching face to face. When you have decided what topics you will teach, you then think about the most effective methods of teaching them.

As well as basic decisions about whether to teach from rule to example or example to rule, this stage includes decisions about the use of:

- Definitions and repetitions;
- Lists, tables, charts and diagrams;
- Examples, anecdotes and analogies;
- Guidelines, demonstrations and simulations.

Level 3: the production phase on instructional design.

Third, at the production stage, the text is checked for clarity and consistency, as well as for sufficient "signposts" to help students find their way through the text. We need to ensure that there are sufficient:

- Headings and subheadings to help comprehension;
- Icons, white space and other helpful graphic features;
- Bullet lists

Developing the structure

The section plan shows your main headings and sub-headings for the section. Each of these headings and sub-headings is then developed, or elaborated, using examples, explanations, descriptions and so on. At this stage, the writer fills out all the section headings as fully as possible, without any DTP work. The goal here is to produce an interesting text, but there is no attempt to work on the visual design. This can be done later, at the production stage. The important thing at this stage is to produce a complete, accurate text.

The section plan gives you the sequence of headings and topics that you would use as the skeleton or structure for your development of the topics. Let's just look at the development of the first heading, before we go on to look at the whole section in its final form. During this stage, we are making decisions about how to teach these topics:

- What examples should we use ?
- Can we use anecdotes to make the content relevant and bring it to life ?
- What other teaching strategies are available for these topics ?
- When should I teach from the rule to example, and when from example to rule?

You will notice that the text has a very dull appearance at this stage of writing; this is because getting the content right is the important task during development.

Why write objectives ?

A statement of the learning objectives is helpful to both learners and teachers, because it tells us exactly what we are aiming to achieve.

How can objectives help the students?

Clearly written objectives help students' learning by showing them exactly what they are expected to learn, or to do. This gives the students a tool for checking on their learning; it means that they can answer the question Can I do this ?

Example

A clear objective might be: "Students will be able to name the components of a camera".

Students will have no difficulty in checking whether they have achieved the objective. Either they can name the components, or they can't.

If you wrote the same objective as "Students will know the components of a camera". It would be too vague. A student could easily think that they know, but would not necessarily check because there is no objective way to check "knowing".

How can objectives help you as the teacher/writer.

Clear objectives help you think about how you can: assess your students; consider your teaching strategies; plan and sequence your materials.

In this section, the writer is teaching from the rule to the example.

The production level of instructional design

At the production stage, the editor and the DTP technician collaborate to make the text accessible and attractive. The editor checks that the language is clear, friendly and pitched correctly, and that all the necessary components of a learning text are included. The editor and the DTP technician work together to ensure that the text is well spaced on the page, in a size that is comfortable for reading.

Headings are used to introduce topics and sub-topics; and other signposts such as icons and bullet lists are included. In a low-cost production, the devices of a good word processing package provide enough graphic features to create an attractive and accessible text.

Let's look at the whole section *Writing objectives for students*, after the third layer of instructional design has been applied to the text.

Writing Objectives for students

Why write objectives?

A statement of the learning objectives is helpful to both learners and teachers, because it tells us exactly what we are aiming to achieve.

How objectives can help student.

Clearly written objectives help students' learning by showing them exactly what they are expected to learn, or to do. This gives students a tool for checking their learning; it means that they can answer the question *Can I do this?*

Example

A clear objective might be:

"Students will be able to name the components of a camera".

Students will have no difficulty in checking whether they have achieved the objective. Either they can name the components, or they can't.

If you wrote the same objective as "Students will know the components of a camera". It would be too vague. A student could easily think that they know, but would not necessarily check because there is no objective way to check "knowing".

How objectives can help you as the teacher/writer.

Clear objectives help you:

- think about how you can assess your students;
- consider your teaching strategies;
- plan and structure your materials.

What's the difference between an aim and an objective?

Both aims and objectives express the learning goals. The difference is that an aim is a broad, general statement of an educational goal. One aim can include a number of different objectives. An objective is more specific, and is carefully and clearly worded in "behavioural" language, so that students can see exactly what they are aiming to learn.

Example

An aim might be: Students will be proficient in using a manually controlled camera. This aim would include a number of different objectives; these objectives might be as follows:

By using a manually controlled camera, students will be able to:

- correctly adjust a focus control;
- correctly adjust the exposure;
- correctly adjust the aperture;
- frame well composed pictures in the viewfinder.

How can I make sure that I'm writing objectives clearly?

There are two things you need to do to write objectives. First, you need to be clear about what the students should be able to do when they have achieved the required learning. Second, you need to write these in behavioural, or action verbs, avoiding cognitive verbs.

Use action verbs

Useful verbs for writing objectives include:

List, name, recognise, identify, describe, define, outline;

Demonstrate (a competence), perform (a procedure);

Explain, give reasons, translate;

Calculate, summarise, use a formula;

Classify, analyse, compare and contrast, derive;

Extrapolate, predict, test, justify, argue.

Avoid using cognitive verbs

The words you need to avoid using when you are writing objectives are:

Know, be familiar with, understand, and other cognitive verbs denoting mental processes. These words don't help students to objectively test their learning.

Is there one correct way to write objectives?

Most learning materials list the learning objectives at the beginning of each section (or lesson). You may want to write them less formally, in narrative form.

Example

At the end of this text, you will be able to write assessable behavioural objectives, using action verbs and avoiding cognitive verbs. You will be able to explain the difference between an aim and an objective. You will be able to list several behavioural verbs, at different levels of complexity, that are useful for writing objectives.

If you use this narrative style, you may wish to repeat each objective, at the beginning of each relevant topic. At the end of the section, the objectives can be repeated in the checklist.

Alternative ways of writing objectives

Because behavioural objectives help students and teachers to assess learning, this is the most common way of writing objectives. Sometimes you may need to reassure students that you don't expect them to have learnt a new skill or fact completely, but to have made some progress. In this case, you might want to use a "developmental" objective, showing that you don't expect complete learning at this stage.

Example

Students will develop:

- an understanding of the effect of aperture size;
- skill in using the aperture setting appropriately.

The use of bold headings, bullet lists and generous spacing all contribute to the accessibility of the text. If you have the resources, you could make the text more attractive, using more graphic material as icons and illustrations.

A model for on-the-job continuing education and training in the Fire Brigade

Roman Nagorski (ed.)

A TRAINING SEMINAR for the STATE FIRE BRIGADE

Polish Association for Continuing Engineering Education "EDUSTIM"

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1. Background

The Superior Headquarters of the State Fire Brigade (SFB) was invited to be an institutional co-partner of EDUSTIM (the local partner in Poland) within the REREAL project. It was involved in the project activities to represent actually one of the target groups of the project - people at work for whom learning, especially open and flexible learning (OFL), is specifically recommended to meet educational needs and to achieve educational aims. Firemen (firemen-rescuers) fulfil exactly this condition. The specificity of their service - being all the time at disposal in the fire-rescue units and having much time free of fire-rescue actions, which could be devoted to learning - makes firemen the subject of particular interest to the REREAL project.

a. Organisation of the Polish Fire Brigade

In Poland, there are three kinds of fire brigades:

- State Fire Brigade (SFB),
- volunteer fire brigade (VFB),
- industrial fire brigade (IFB).

The State Fire Brigade (SFB) has the following organisational structure:

- the Superior Headquarters of SFB,
- the voivodeship headquarters of SFB,
- the county headquarters of SFB,
- units of SFB (rescue and fire fighting units).

The Superior Headquarters is subordinated to the Ministry of Administration and Internal Affairs. According to the parliamentary act and other legal regulations, it coordinates the whole national rescue and fire fighting system. In the country, the Superior Headquarters acts (plays the coordinating function) by means of the voivo-

deship headquarters of SFB. The county headquarters are subordinated to the local self-governments and financed also by the local authorities.

The basic units of SFB, i.e. rescue and fire fighting units are subordinated to the county headquarters and located in towns. They participate in rescue and fire fighting actions in and outside towns, in their mother county, or even beyond, if necessary, (e.g. during floods, forest fires etc.).

The volunteer fire brigades (VFB) are self-government organisations (associations) acting in the country (villages) and in small towns. They act on the basis of statutes, approved by the voivodeship commanders of SFB and registered by courts. Members-firemen are supposed to pass the examinations in front of the county headquarters commanders. The unit of VFB is financed by the local self-government of its own community. There are also unions of VFB units (county, voivodeship and national level), but the membership is not obligatory.

The SFB (the county headquarters) has the duty to train firemen of VFB. The training of IFB (Industrial Fire Brigade) staff by SFB is payable.

b. The fire brigades training so far

The SFB has its own system of training. It comprises both a formal school system preparing young people for the fireman profession and a system of upgrading, updating and developing qualifications of firemen in service. This system also aims at training people to play the role of firemen in volunteer and industrial fire brigades.

The school system comprises:

- 18 province centres for training of state fire brigade preparing candidates for the fireman profession - first level,
- 4 non-commissioned officers' schools of state fire brigade preparing firemen-rescuers (non-commissioned officers), after 18 months of practical placement in rescue-fire fighting units - second level
- 3 aspirants' colleges of state fire brigades aiming at educating the so-called " aspirants" of the fire brigade,
- one technical university - the Main School of Fire Service in Warsaw - which trains the firemen-officers in two courses:
 - the first degree course of engineer level
 - the second-degree course of master level.

The system corresponds to the new national educational system after its reform of 1999. It is open to young people at each level (if they pass the entrance requirements). At the higher level, the graduates of "civil higher schools" of certain subject domains may receive the officer's degree after completing a special post-diploma course.

The Main School of Fire Service offers also a "civil course" of higher level "engineer fire-protection specialist".

The second essential part of the SFB training system structure is the "subsystem" aiming at further training of SFB staff as well as initial and further training of fire-

men from VFB and IFB units. The main objectives of further training are:

- to upgrade the level of professional "fire education", as well as
- to update and develop different kinds of qualifications, mainly vocational ones.

In the essential range it is connected with:

- achievements of successive degrees of career in the fire brigade structure (aspirants, officers, managing and administrative functions), and
- receiving additional formal specialist qualifications; for this aim several specialised training courses and the so called "post-diploma studies" (for officers) should be included in the training programme.

The general principle of participation in training courses is the delegation to a school for an upgrading course or to be sent to a specialised course by the superior headquarters commander.

The training centres (schools) of SFB provide both initial training (fire brigade education) and further training (specialised courses).

They employ a pedagogical staff - instructors and organisational staff for logistic affairs.

Most of the staff is recruited from the SFB structure. The instructors have a pedagogical preparation received in a special course. They also develop their pedagogical competencies during symposia and workshops. Additionally, external specialists from various external institutions, e.g.: doctors, lawyers and experts-engineers are invited to give lectures and provide practical training on special topics.

The training centres (schools) of SFB, including the Main School of Fire Service, meet most of the training needs. The remaining training activities are realised in the form of delegation to special courses in "civil" higher schools or training centres. Moreover, scientific conferences and practical workshops dedicated to currently important topics (in these events the specialists from various institutions take part) are organised regularly. During the last years, especially since 1991, the SFB was open to other, external training activities. Some groups from SFB participated in different kinds of training actions organised by external providers, including foreign ones, in the frame of the PHARE Fund and intergovernmental conventions. Also, some SFB groups, mostly officers, decision-makers and specialists from the superior and other headquarters took part in several study visits in the fire-brigade institutions, organisations and training centres in EU countries.

The training centre in Czestochowa combines the function of non-commissioned officers' school and aspirants' college. It also provides some specialised courses. The centre is called the Training Centre of State Fire Brigade.

All typical training courses are provided in a traditional group form. Initial training is provided in the stationary (full time) form. Long courses aiming at raising the degree of education of firemen and longer "post-diploma" courses are realised in extramural and sandwich-type forms. Shorter specialised courses are implemented in the form of several days of group meetings.

It seems that the system should be completed by different kinds of formal and informal training programmes based on more flexible and accessible forms, comprising various kinds of learning supported both by printed materials and information technology. For this aim an infrastructure and competent staff are needed and, in particular, tutors and vocational advisors should be accessible for learners.

c. Practical conclusions

In the period of December 1998 - January 1999 discussions with the Directorate of the Office for Personnel and Training were held (during several meetings) and materials received from the Office were studied. As a result:

- the organisation and structure of the fire brigade in Poland,
 - the training system in the SFB,
 - training needs of the fire brigade in Poland,
 - possibilities of development of OFL in the SFB,
 - needs for implementation of learning style and OFL in the SFB,
- was described (reported to the project coordinating team in February 1999).

The decision makers of the SFB agreed that taking into account large training needs of the fire brigade in Poland (including the voluntary fire brigade) and the specificity of their service the training system of the SFB should be completed by more open and flexible learning based training programmes aiming at updating, improving and developing vocational qualifications of firemen-rescuers. It was pointed out that the following needs should be met in order to put this conclusion into practice:

- 1) the pedagogical staff of the training centres (schools educating the fire brigades staff) should receive and/or improve respective knowledge and skills required to deliver learning based and self-learning based training programmes and courses provided in the open and flexible modes, including these with the use of information technologies (IT);
- 2) some pilot training programmes (from the list of topics corresponding to the training needs) should be designed, prepared, implemented and evaluated;
- 3) the popularisation of learning based training, including OFL, within the structure of the SFB, especially within the voivodeship and county headquarters, should be undertaken.

As the first two activities (within the REREAL project during the first year of its realisation) the following ones were selected:

- a training seminar for a selected group of the pedagogical staff of decisive level aiming at introducing them to the subject of learning based training in a flexible mode, in particular with the use of IT,
- a guide on OFL to be distributed within the structure of the SFB (training staff and decision-makers in headquarters responsible for training).

2. Preparatory works

In March 1999 a working meeting between the representatives of EDUSTIM (local project coordinator and invited experts on OFL and IT) and the Superior Headquarter of the SFB (Deputy Director and specialists of the Office for Personnel and Training) took place.

The following scheme of a training seminar was designed:

- 1) objective - to present and discuss the main aspects of OFL to start thinking of adding more learning style based on OFL methodology and IT tools to the training system;
- 2) recipients (participants) - deputy directors for pedagogical affairs of all training centres (schools) of the SFB;
- 3) date, duration and place - 28.04.99 at the Central School of the SFB in Czestochowa (duration - 8 hours approximately);
- 4) programme -
 - a) introduction (objectives of the REREAL project, as well as objectives and plans of cooperation between the SFB and EDUSTIM);
 - b) introduction to the methodology of OFL, including DL (main notions and aspects, design of training programmes and preparation of learning materials, principles of tutoring),
 - c) introduction to IT in OFL and DL (multi- and hypermedia, Internet and WWW tools, courseware, virtual classroom),
 - d) summary (seminar assessment, next steps);
- 5) methodology -
 - a) expert presentations (using a multimedia projector and Internet presentations),
 - b) free comments and discussion,
 - c) materials - photocopies of presentation slides and examples of different kind of educational materials (manuals, course materials) prepared in OFL methodology.

It was decided that, respectively to the current interest and feedback reactions of the seminar participants, the programme should be open in details. Their realisation should also be flexible in time.

Coffee breaks and lunchtime should be of a "working" character for discussion on general and particular problems.

Next, during the meeting, the contents and the editorial form of a pilot guide on OFL to be prepared by EDUSTIM for the SFB structure (responsible for training and senior trainers) were pre-designed.

It was agreed that taking into account the recipients of the guide - the first one of this kind - it should contain:

- quite a large background (world, Polish and Fire Brigade context describing the educational environment, situation and perspectives for adult education, including education based on open and flexible learning),
- materials prepared for a training seminar revised and completed according to the expectations formulated during the seminar discussions,

- presentations and descriptions of good practice (in Poland and in EU) showing a variety of possible solutions to be applied to the training system of the SFB.

It will be useful to produce the guide in a printed form, as well as on CD in HTML format (HyperText Markup Language).

The period between the meeting and the seminar was devoted to the elaboration by experts of detailed syllabuses of presentations, preparation of seminar materials (electronic and printed) and to agreements on organisational questions between the EDUSTIM coordinator and the Office for Personnel and Training of the SFB.

3. Implementation of the seminar

As agreed, the seminar was held at the Central School of the SFB in Czestochowa in April.

The Central School is the training centre having different educational and training functions. It is the school of firemen-rescuers and the school of aspirants of the fire brigade. At the same time, many different specialised training courses for fire-brigade staff are provided there. Among others, several groups of fire brigades from Lithuania and Belorussia are trained in specialised subject areas. The School is planned to be the central training centre for the fire brigades of all Central European countries. Its campus and premises belonged formerly to the army (*there were barracks of a large military unit*). In the old walls of the existing buildings, completely modernised and adapted to the foreseen aims, there are now classrooms and conference rooms with modern audio-visual equipment and access to Internet, specialised laboratories, including ones equipped with simulators, library, reading room and rooms for physical training, as well as hotels, canteens, coffee and recreation rooms. There are also grounds for field training.

25 representatives of the SFB participated in the seminar: deputy commanders for pedagogical affairs of all SFB schools, including the Higher School of Fire Service, and several representatives of the Office for Personnel and Training of the Superior Headquarters, including the Deputy Director of the Office.

Roman Nagorski, coordinator of the REREAL project activities from the EDUSTIM side, had a short introductory presentation in which he described shortly the history of involvement of the SFB in the project activities, objectives of cooperation, works that have been done up to the present, objectives and programme of the seminar.

Next, according to the schedule, the invited experts presented their contributions:

- the first part (before lunch break) was devoted to the introduction to the methodology of open, flexible and distance learning with special attention to the principles of preparation of didactic materials and playing the role of a tutor;
- the second part (after lunch) was dedicated to the applications of information technologies to learning illustrated at the end by an example of an Internet course on OFL (named LOLA).

During the refreshing breaks several particular problems were discussed and examples of collected learning materials were exhibited to the seminar participants.

In a short summary, Roman Nagorski remembered the objectives of cooperation between EDUSTIM and the SFB within the REREAL project and described shortly the next steps to be taken: publishing of a pilot guide on OFL for the SFB training services (in preparation) and training actions aiming at further progressive implementation of OFL in the training system of SFB and dissemination of results of the REREAL project according to the identified needs of the fire brigade.

4. Assessment

There were no formal questioning to evaluate the seminar just after its implementation. In discussions one observed various kinds of reactions - from the general (what for?, why?) to the particular ones (how?) concerning OFL and use of IT. Further explanations done by EDUSTIM experts permitted a better understanding of some aspects.

Some feed-back information should be received - but after a time, after the next two-three planned steps, including distribution of the guide on OFL. It takes some time to reflect the presented ideas.

The Deputy Director of the Office for Personnel and Training finished the seminar with the conclusion that the next planning steps should be successively realised.

But we can already state today that the State Fire Brigade (SFB), having its own training system 'separated' from the public educational system, could become the learning organisation - if the authorities and the pedagogical staff have the will to do it. It seems that there is a 'quantum' of interest in it. The plans expressed by the Superior Headquarter for the next year (and the near future) are as follows:

- a) to select by pedagogical staff in all fire schools (training centres) topics and existing courses (modules) which are the 'best' - with respect to needs and possibilities; to deliver them in open and flexible (including distance) mode;
- b) to discuss the proposals during the meeting (planned for September, October) for making priorities and draft-schedule, estimate costs etc.;
- c) to make decisions on a decisive level;
- d) to train the selected 'executive team' in skills required for delivery of training materials and programmes and playing the role of the tutor;
- e) to realise the excepted list of tasks - successively, in pilot scale, with attentive monitoring and evaluation and supporting by guidelines and guides.

During the first year the team consisted (except for some administrative assistance) in four persons from the EDUSTIM side (coordinator and three invited experts) and three persons from the Department for Personnel and Training of the SFB. This team will grow during the second year mainly from the SFB side, supported by new experts (in the respective matters) involved in EDUSTIM. The team is and will be interdisciplinary, of course.

List of used abbreviations:

SFB	State Fire Brigade
VFB	Volunteer Fire Brigade
IFB	Industrial Fire Brigade
DTP	Desk Top Publishing

Learning models for ageing people through supplying for and practising IT skills in connection with information society competencies

Pijro Keinänen

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Seeking new ways for adults to approach IT

Background

In the beginning of 2000 in Finland there are big challenges for adult education. Nearly half of the population over 45 has no vocational education. Changes in working life, development of IT, high unemployment rates, changes in age structure and big differences in education levels between age groups cause additional challenges. The Finnish National Programme for Ageing Workers (1998-2000) supports people over 45, their qualifications and energy, so that they could work longer and retire closer to official pension age.

Age Programme is one of the main focus areas in different sectors of adult education. In Rovala-Opisto we have been interested already for some years in adult education for ageing people, mostly unemployed. The main aim of the courses has been to try to find pathways out of unemployment and to provide basic skills in IT. Providing IT skills has two functions: to add to people's possibilities to get employed and to give the ageing the possibility to be an active part of the information society. According to our experiences ageing people are willing to learn IT, when attention is directed to the circumstances; for instance, adult students want to study with equals (age, level), support of the group is very important, inclusion of examination (computer driver's licence) into the program gives additional motivation.

www.rovala.fi (Rovala Folk High School)

Networking

With the "Association for unemployed in Rovaniemi area" and the "Association for Korkalovaara suburb residents" we have co-operated earlier when providing education for self-help group leaders. Now we arranged a meeting where we offered, through their association, the possibility to learn IT and in turn we could get deeper information about people's needs and preconceptions about learning and learning IT.

Inquiry and interviews before the planning process

Fifteen people, aged from 41-71, three women and twelve men, answered our questionnaire. Ten of them described their IT skills as low, nine of them had little or no possibility at all to use IT in their work. Six of them had the possibility to use a computer at home and in their leisure time.

In the interviews (nine persons) the main themes were adult education and information society. Adult education they found not always so useful; "the courses have been designed mainly in order to employ more teachers..." . According to their experiences the tempo in courses is often too fast, the teacher does not pause to evaluate the progress of the group but tries to follow the curriculum pedantically. They wished that adult education would offer more courses that suit the differing individual needs. But overall, the experiences were positive and they said that it is nice to learn something new.

General impressions about information society were that it is developing fast and it is a new society. One must learn computer skills in case all services will be handled over the internet, like social benefits. The development of IT decreases the number of jobs available and increases the number of so called second rate citizens. There is a general feeling that things cannot develop this fast, that there must be a backlash.

The issue of one's own position in the information society and one's relation to it

- the interviewees regard themselves neither as "the citizens of the new information society " nor as marginalized; the interviewees are concerned about those who may be in danger of being completely marginalized
- IT is not seen to be an essential part of the interviewees' lives, they will take advantage of it (the ones who know how to use computers), but they can do without
- they are curious to find out how to use computers to one's own advantage, but they do not have unrealistic expectations of what new technologies can offer to them
- usage and evaluation of the potential benefits are centred around work life rather than leisure

Learning programme

On the basis of the information we acquired from the inquiry and the interviews we planned a learning programme for phase 1:

Phase 1	Basic skills in databases, word-processing, Excel, Internet, Pictures (120 hours). 5 men completed the phase.
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After phase 1 we had a planning meeting, where teacher, planner and students from the previous phase together with new ones decided about the contents and the mode of learning in the next phase.

Phase 2	More participants were included. Two groups were formed; one for women (11 women, age between 40-56) and one for the men who completed the phase 2. In both groups one or two self-help group leaders joined.
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During this phase the emphasis was on students' identifying their individual needs for IT usage. We also

encouraged to work more autonomously in the classroom.

In both groups the self-help group leaders took little by little more responsibility for the learning of the group. In the women's group learners were learners on two levels, so they decided to work in pairs, the one who knows better helping the other one.

After phase 2 we had a meeting again where we decided how to proceed in the spring term 2000.

Phase 3

This spring we have worked slightly different than before. Instead of having a teacher in the classroom, we have combined traditional learning with distance learning. Both our learning groups still meet at a certain time and place and take classes together in a classroom, the schedule is set and it is basically the same for both groups. Both groups have tutors (the self help group leaders), who get all the materials to study in advance and can then help their fellow students in group meetings with problems they have. The teacher is absent but only physically. During the meetings the teacher is available for help either by phone or via e-mail. Beforehand sent material includes both study papers and assignments. At group meetings papers are dealt to other participants by tutors and they all try to follow the set programme.

Problems, problems.....

The biggest problem we have is lack of time and space to use computers freely. Many of the participants do not have their own computer so the two hours we have been able to schedule weekly for each group to study with our facility's computers is just not enough.

Following the written programme has also been problematic. Our students who are used to a teacher going through the material and being in the same room with them are now having trouble going through written material and at the same time trying to work out how to use the computer as described in their papers. It is still difficult for them to apply acquired skills independently.

Of course the problems we have experienced include technical problems as well. The Internet e-mail service that we use is not always performing as it should. Sometimes the messages we sent to each other during the class do not reach their recipient as rapidly as they are meant to and the class may even be over for the day when they arrive. But we have kind of accepted that technology can fail us.

The problems we have were not limited to students only. The geographical space between teacher and students affects the teacher, too. Lack of instant response and not knowing how the students are coping can be frustrating. Even though we have agreed to communicate during the classes if problems occur and otherwise too, that does not always happen and it can leave the teacher feeling very lonely. Lack of response and proper communication between students and teacher can also make the course planning difficult.

What have we learned until now?

- Learning IT is just like learning a language - you learn only by using it
- It is difficult to maintain the skills if you don't have your own computer
- It is important to recognise the pace which is suitable for the learner - the teachers easily become "space blind"
- Group spirit is very important in the learning process
- Sometimes we have difficulties to prove the importance of IT skills to people who are not used to live in the "world of letters".
- It is very important to identify learners' real needs for the usage of IT. It is not enough to identify the need to learn IT skills, but you have to recognise the real usage of IT in your life.

Interview with Pirjo Keinänen

Rovala-Opisto

The evidence of your work goes against recent research findings which maintain that older workers will not participate in lifelong learning.

a) What were your experiences with enthusiasm and willingness to participate in your courses?

My experiences are very positive, people are very enthusiastic and willing to participate in the courses - and now I talk about courses where the main subject area is to learn basic IT-skills and the learners are adult people, mostly over 45 years.

b) Did you find out about this positive attitude as a by-product in your courses or did you confront your group with direct questioning?

I have many kinds of "evidence" for my opinion:

- figures; there are always about 40-60 applicants for the courses, where only 12 can be taken in
- direct questioning, formal and informal interviews and conversations ; when goals and contents of the study plan are clear and concrete enough - as IT seems to be - adult, ageing people are very motivated to learn, but they have quite bad memories from the times they were at school when they were young, so the "back to school"-idea is usually rejected

c) Do people come to your course voluntarily or on an obligatory basis?

d) Do the participants of your courses come because they look for motivation?

e) Do they come because they have to, otherwise they won't get their unemployment money?

f) *Do they choose courses out of their free will?*

Rovala-Opisto, our institution itself belongs to the area of Adult Education, to the sector "Liberal Education", so in principle everybody is studying in our institute voluntarily. The reasons and the ways how to come to our courses can be different, and at the same time this means different financing structures for us:

- lines; music, sign language
media, law etc.; generally non-vocational, full-time, possibly residential, often preparing for university entrance exams, students mostly young adults, financing: 50% state, 50% students themselves (they get student money from the state), students choose lines from "AE markets"
- additional vocational education; various courses, full-time or flexible study, short or long, students over 25 years, often ageing (over 45) adults, the state/province is buying the courses from us, students pay only a minimum fee (unemployed nothing), but they don't get unemployed money, they have to live with their student money, students choose courses from "AE markets"
- labour market oriented education; courses are bought from us by local Labour Office, 3-5 months full time studies, types of education bought from our institute are mostly 1) "careers counselling" + IT, 2) immigrant education, 3) courses belonging to projects funded by the European Social Fund; in principle unemployed people come to the courses out of their free will, they apply to the courses from the Labour office supply, but if they don't apply they can lose their unemployment money, during studies they get unemployment money
- short courses; part-time (evenings and week-ends), students choose courses from our supply
- it is also possible to do open university studies in our institute

My experiences are mostly from labour market oriented education and additional vocational education, contents being "second chance"-type-education and emphasis on IT-skills and in both cases students have come to the courses out of their free will (so they say) and they have been very well motivated (because the Labour Office does not buy enough IT-courses.....).

g) *What kind of barriers towards participating have you come across?*

- 1) Economic reasons; for adult and especially for ageing people studies are sometimes possible and sometimes not, it is not only a question of attitude, adult people have their families and other economic obligations. If you want to study with your unemployment money, you have to choose from Labour Office supply, which contains quite narrow and short courses. If you want to choose vocational or university studies, you have to make do with the small student money.
- 2) These ageing adult people who would most need education (half of the labour force over 45 years has no vocational education) are also most inexperienced to participate in any kind of adult education. That means that the only memories they have are from their school times, and they are not always good memories. They are afraid to participate in courses where there are many young people (age-racism has worked....). They are afraid that they don't know enough to participate in any education and that they are not able to learn anything any more. This means a special challenge to our methods and contents, too. Originally folk high school methods were "counter methods" to normal schools (democracy, dialogue etc.) and the stu-

dents were very active and willing to cultivate/educate themselves and not first of all for labour reasons but to be able to live individualistically and maybe struggle against authorities. But now we live in a society where labour market utility is what counts. Most of these ageing students have never studied only for fun or for cultural-reasons, or been able to participate in personnel education during their work history. So the contents of the courses have to be planned in such a concrete way that the outcomes of the learning processes can be easily changed into money and working opportunities on the labour markets.

- 3) One big barrier to tackle is also that many people are not used to handle the "crisis", the "information-chaos" which you inevitably have to tackle if you want to move to different levels of knowledge. I have noticed that for many adult people the first-weeks-chaos is in a way a disappointment, they have imagined and hoped studying to be only nice and with everything in order.

h) How do you tackle this barriers in your courses?

a) by communicating about them?

b) by making them part of the learning process?

The economic barrier works usually in such a way that people don't come to course although they have applied after counting the realities. With people who are participating the courses I try to communicate very openly about these things and in that way it is a part of the learning process. I believe that when people learn to know how society and people are functioning they are not so alone with their feelings and they are able to influence their lives realistically.

In this new "A-info" - initiative we use interviews and meetings not only for to get information but for building a trustful relationship between teacher and learners.

i) What are your and other researchers' critical comments on the general applicability of the lifelong learning concepts?

There are some critical comments made by some researches in the field of sociology of education pointing out that the lifelong learning is middle-class way of life, and by taking this value as the highest value you use symbolic power over people who are not used(or able) to think like that. The initiative to be educated doesn't come genuinely from older workers themselves, but from outside of their lives: from educators, employers, authorities. It means that the workers themselves have to feel always unqualified and they can accuse only themselves, if they are unemployed or don't earn enough to have a good life.

In some respect I agree with them, I don't like that the lifelong learning concept is used as a weapon; it is not fair to make these people responsible for today's situation. But I think that although education is a middle class value and a useful way to classify people when struggling for jobs, it doesn't give the right to deny the value of education (as did the former working class culture...) and prevent people to get the keys for today's life, skills to "swim". Sometimes the situation today seems schizophrenic; on one hand people are told to educate themselves for survival, and on the other hand this is possible only for a few to that extent that it really prevents the marginalizing process.

j) How do you normally evaluate your learning process?

k) How do you evaluate the benefit of your teaching methods for the learners?

l) How do you evaluate the learners' progress?

Our evaluating system is not very well developed and therefore we are going to begin a one year project in the fall of 99 with some folk high schools to develop our own quality measurement system, the project is funded by the Ministry of Education. In the next years the ministry will anyway use some of their own quality measurements to evaluate also all liberal education institutions. The big question is: what are the benefits for the learners in the field of liberal education? And how to measure them? Until now we have used several kinds of questionnaires during and at the end of course. Of course open conversations are an important way to get feedback, too. The Labour Office and the Province are using their own questionnaires additionally in the courses bought by them. Their benefit-conception is unambiguous: you benefit from the course only if you have found a job after the course. I think individuals have many kinds of needs and expectations when they choose our institution and our task is to meet them as well as possible.

In different lines and courses there are different ways to evaluate learners' progress: tests, portfolios, essays etc. Computer Driving Licence Tests and Language Examinations, which are nation-wide, have proved to be useful and motivating as a part of a course.

The region you come from has a very high rate of unemployment but as you said a very developed culture of coping with unemployment.

a) Are there any data on the social development and prospects in your region?

Unemployment rate in Finland, June 1999, is 10,3 %, but in our area, Lapland, it is 22,0 %, and there are villages with even over 30 % unemployment. The prospects are not well, it is new that unemployment rates in different parts of Finland are differing so much, here in Lapland over 20 % and in the Helsinki area about 8 %, now we are not any more "in the same boat". It means that in Lapland there is the biggest net emigration. It means a big challenge to Lapland to keep jobs and people here, because another, market oriented view is: let the people move, why give "artificial respiration" to Lapland.

b) How do these developments affect the role and the impact of your work?

Earlier, when the problem was common all over Finland, it meant that the Labour Office had quite good resources to buy courses. Now we have a new situation and a new Government, maybe the policy will be different. On the other hand in its programme government stresses education as a means to prevent marginalisation and gives special attention to ageing people. There is one sentence, in particular, which makes us happy: "The Government strengthens the conditions of Liberal Education". I don't know what it will mean, it has not been there before.

c) Has your work an impact on improving conditions in the labour market?

I hope so, I hope that our education gives people better equipment for all kinds of periods of their lives and that way their roles as actors in the labour market will improve.

d) How does the culture of coping with unemployment show in your courses?

In these depression years nearly everybody got at least some experience about unemployment in the family, so it is very easy to talk about it and it is easier for people to understand all that follows from it. We have taken "Job seeking skills" as a part of general civil skills and communication skills.

You have described the institutional framework for your work, the development of the information superhighway programme from 1996 onwards. The overall focus of this programme is the enhancement of information society skills.

How far has this programme come so far?

a) on the level of creating international networks for vocational learning institutions?

I don't know! I don't know so much about vocational learning institutions, but I can try to find the information.....

b) on the level of developing new methods of communication and study material?

c) on the level of teacher training?

The aim of the Ministry of Education was to make Internet services available to all education institutes in Finland by the end of 1999. 65% of all comprehensive schools and upper secondary general schools were already connected to the network at the beginning of 1998, the figure being 80-90% for lower secondary and upper secondary schools, 90-95% for upper secondary general schools and 100% for vocational schools and colleges at the beginning of 1999.

In the new programme of 1999 the Government says, that in the next step of the Information society strategy it will be "concentrated on educating teachers, to create new learning surroundings, to develop study material in our languages (Finnish and Swedish) and to strengthen multifaceted literacy".

The lifelong learning of the Finnish government stresses the necessity of transferring teaching into better modes of learning.

How far has this concept been realised?

a) How does it manifest itself in adult education?

I would say: not much. Individual learning programmes, close connections to working life (learning at work), modular studies; they all are much talked about but in practice not so much used, and results are not always what they were meant. Individual learning methods, when properly carried out, are very expensive. Learning at work and distance learning can be misused only to save money. Modular studies are not much developed, because holistic learning is more appreciated. There is not enough co-operation between different providers and sectors, liberal adult education organisations have traditionally been very autonomous.

b) Does it also reach out to traditional education?

I think the problems are there quite same. Much efforts have been put to initiatives to get education and working life/enterprises to a closer co-operation.

Another focus of the government's initiative was to make continuous learning an integral part of people's way of life.

How were these chances promoted in financial, technical and other respects?

Of course, the biggest stress has been on the development of the Finnish Information Society, where citizens are expected to adopt and master new technical skills, the aim being that all or almost all of them should acquire these skills. The ministries have made huge investments in technical infrastructure. "Prime years" - programme has begun (as a focus, but no money!!) to promote lifelong learning of ageing people. I think all this isn't enough at all.

The overall concept of the superhighway programme includes five sectors:

- *lifelong learning*
- *language examinations*
- *computer driving license*
- *the age programme*
- *educational daily allowance (people, especially older people, get the possibility to study without losing unemployment money)*

Why do you think only 900 people made use of this educational daily allowance?

First, the overall concept of the superhighway programme doesn't include these sectors! These above mentioned points belong to "the framework", which I think are most importantly affecting the work we are doing here in Rovala-Opisto in the area: "ageing people-unemployment-adult education-information society skills".

This "educational daily allowance" is quite a new form of support. New figures are: 1056 persons used that, mostly women. The prerequisites to get that are quite difficult, but last year there were about 120 000 unemployed who would have fulfilled them. The reasons why it was not used by more people must be: 1) people were not informed enough about the law, 2) adult education supply doesn't meet the needs of people, 3) adult education field and concepts are difficult understand. These were also the results of our earlier interviews (1998-99).

In your research model you have enlarged your scope of research to working together with the association for unemployed people and the association for suburb residence.

Could you describe the two institutions and could you explain why you have decided to cooperate with them?

The Resident Association of Korkalovaara was founded in 1984, it has 50 members in the area of 7500 inhabitants near our institution. The unemployment rate there is higher than average. Its purpose is to activate the inhabitants and to develop collaboration.

The Association for Unemployed People in Rovaniemi area was founded 1993, it has 180 members. It's purpose is to improve the situation and the quality of life of unemployed people.

For many years Rovala has cooperated with these associations. The members suit to our target group, for which we are interested to develop our methods.

You have started the A-info initiative (Adult Student Information Society).

What are your plans for this project?

We think that very often the reason why people are not so motivated to learn to use IT is the lack of purposes to use it. IT-skills as goals are not so important, they get

their value, when you know where, how and what to use them for. Our plans are to supply this target group with basic skills in IT and then give guidance or work together with them in applying these skills to any objective which is their own and which helps them to be an active citizen in information society.

You state that you have altered your study plans according to the needs brought in.

a) How did your study plan look so far?

b) How did you come to the present study plan?

Actually we didn't alter our study plans, because in this case we started with a clean table; we'll listen to them and then do it. Of course we had some own thoughts about a broader "tray", but then we noticed that first we have to give some kind of basic package of IT, and only after that it would be possible to talk about other contents.

c) What sort of guidance will you supply?

d) How will you teach the trainers to work as guidance workers?

The next phase of our project could be called "guidance" and in IT skills it will be that, but it is also a way to get important information for us how these adults use these skills in practise. How should we improve our teaching so it is more useful in practises of everyday life? The other view is that I think that adult, ageing people have quite a lot of "invisible knowledge", which all seem to vanish when we only look at IT-skills. In this next phase we in a way change roles, in many areas they know more than we do about society, politics, hunting, whatever is their own, natural area where to use IT.

This is a small case, there is only one IT teacher who has been working with them. She is interested to continue during the guidance phase. We have no teaching plan for her, this will be a learning process for us, too, by trial and error (in a way an action research model). Of course we study all possible background material and visit the meetings. We are going to cooperate with a self aid group, too, which is working there. These self aid group organisers have studied earlier in Rovala-Opisto. One aim of this work will be the same as in self aid work: guidance itself will become unnecessary.

The guidance tutoring process is planned to start in 1999.

How will you prepare this work?

See above.

The size of the process depends on how we manage to get the national funding to REREAL.

What were your instruments in evaluating your research process?

Until now we have made a questioning for 15 people and theme interviews for 9 people. After the IT basics teaching period at the end of August there will be another questioning. What the instruments during the guidance process will be depends on national funding. In every case we will use observing, the diary method and some kind of questioning.

Extending the ideas of openness in adult education - a network concept

Björn Garefelt

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The Folk High Schools on the Popular Education Network an assessment of the folk high schools' use of the Popular Education Network

During the month of March 2000, the National Council of Popular Education conducted an inquiry among the Swedish folk high schools about their use of the Popular Education Network (PEN). The results are presented here, first with an abstract and then in more detail.

Abstract and conclusions

A clear majority of the Swedish folk high schools are active on the PEN at present. Nevertheless, four out of ten schools still regard themselves as inactive, even if only two schools have reported that no one at those schools has any link to the PEN.

Among the schools which are not active nearly half of them say that their lack of activity depends on lack of know-how about the PEN. At the same time they do express a keen interest in becoming active. A majority of the non-active schools would very much like to have information and training to get started on the PEN.

The strongest motivating factor for most of the schools' activities on the PEN is the chance to get information from the National Council on Popular Education (NCPE). They also stress the opportunity to create their own structures for internal information and communication, and point out the pedagogical possibilities and the chance to have simple access to e-mail.

The advantages of the PEN, over and above other networks, are that it's easy, quick and flexible. The disadvantages are that the format isn't very inviting and that the structure, by some, is seen as messy and hard to grasp.

A decided majority of the active schools have their own local administrator and can manage by themselves to create the structures they need. It's preferable to use First-Class-client when logging on to the PEN, since it's quicker and offers more opportunities, whilst logging on through the web is seen more as a compliment.

Who then, are the users at the active schools that use the PEN? The directors, school leaders and the teachers are represented in almost every case. The administrators to a

slightly lesser degree. It's gratifying that a full four schools out of ten report that both their own students at the school and their extramural students are on the PEN.

The way the active schools use the PEN is well aligned with the motives they have for being there. They use the net as a channel for information from the NCPE, and also as a source of other information from popular education organisations. They use the net for e-mail communication, for internal communication, for their own conferences and as a pedagogical tool.

We're happy to note that half of the active folk high schools remark that they use the net as a pedagogical tool. The net then is seen as a complement to the "normal" teaching, but as crucially important for distance studies.

The active folk high schools are satisfied with the way the PEN works for their needs. Half of the schools say that the net functions very well, while slightly more than a third say that the net works pretty well. None of the schools say that the net works badly for their needs. Inasmuch as that they are not fully satisfied, the problems are related to their own short-comings.

The obstacles they can foresee to an increased use of the PEN are mainly found in the teachers' lack of computer knowledge, lack of time, insufficient knowledge about the PEN and a lack of motivation among the teachers.

Broadly speaking the schools are contented with the information they receive about the PEN.

None of the active schools express an intention to leave the PEN or diminish their use of it and a vast majority regard it as necessary that the net is kept up and developed. Only one of the active schools expresses that it isn't important whether the net be kept or not.

The folk high schools in Sweden are to a large extent connected to the Internet. Only very few schools answer that they lack such connections. Half of the schools have leased line connections. A majority of the schools report that each and everyone at the school have access to computers with an Internet connection.

Here follows a more detailed account of the answers to the inquiry.

The folk high schools that are inactive on the PEN

Four out of ten Swedish folk high schools define themselves as not active on the PEN.

What is the reason for this inactivity?

The dominating reason that is put forth is that they lack the knowledge to be active. Almost half (47%) of the not active schools have given this as their reason.

Only a total of three schools from the inactive group state that they don't see a need for the PEN.

One school out of three give other reasons for not being active on the PEN. The typical reasons being:

- we haven't come that far; we're on our way
- have not had the time; not had the need
- we haven't gotten round to it
- weak interest
- we're waiting for a network
- lack of computers
- firewalls

The schools active on the Popular Education Network (PEN)

Six out of ten Swedish folk high schools (there are a total of 147 of them) are active on the PEN; either a number of their teachers are using the net in their work, or the school has some, or quite a few, conferences for internal use.

Of the active schools almost eight out of ten can be regarded as moderately active, while the rest are extremely active.

Why are you on the Popular Education Network (PEN)?

What is it that motivates the schools to be active on the PEN?

We have a wide range of answers here. Common answers are that the net is easy to use and easily accessible. Many mention the opportunity to be informed, both about news from the NCPE, and about the discussions carried out in the open conferences. Many mention the chance to create one's own information structures for the school's internal communication and information. The answers also underline the pedagogical opportunities offered by the net to create flexibility in ordinary teaching and also for distance studies and distance projects. In some cases the possibilities of using the net for e-mail communication is mentioned.

Relatively few of the active folk high schools use any other network for digital communication (if we disregard the Internet).

POPULAR EDUCATION AND IT = the Popular Education Network

Background

The Popular Education Network (PEN) is a project, co-funded by the Distance Learning Committee and the Foundation for Knowledge and Competence (KK-stiftelsen) and administrated by the National Council for Adult Education. It was started in 1996. (For a brief word list, see the Glossary on Nordic Popular Education Terminology)

The aim of the project is to establish a digital platform within the popular education parameters of open and flexible learning by means of modern information technology (IT) and to develop pedagogical models for using IT in popular education.

A number of experiments were carried out in 1997-98 by folk high schools and study associations with the theme of 'open and flexible learning' with IT-support, they were all funded by the above-mentioned donors. The majority of the projects have used the

facilities of the PEN, more or less intensively, and the information gathered has been published.

The process has gained strength and attention since last year, partly due to having received more money for developing the open and flexible projects within popular education.

At present the development of the PEN is also linked to the Swedish Institute for Distance Education (SIDE).

What is the Popular Education Network?

The popular education network (PEN) is a 'meeting-place', an information forum, a conference centre and a study centre for individuals and groups of people; all of which are active within or somehow tied to folk high schools and study associations. Here ideas and experiences are exchanged, information is given and taken, discussions and conferences take place and a number of study groups are housed there.

But - in contrast to ordinary meeting-places, information forums, etc., everything in popular education is done in digital form; the only thing you can see are the symbols and texts on computer screens all over the country. The individual users of the PEN can be anywhere they can connect their computers to the Internet, becoming just another of the thousands of more or less active participants.

Using the PEN, folk high schools and study associations can quickly and easily create their own conference systems, they can organise courses and study circles - all of them carried out totally or partially at a distance, they can build networks where monitors and teachers of various subjects can meet and learn from each other, and arrange for continuous in-service-training, etc., etc.

As an individual PEN-user you also get a personal e-mail address and a private mailbox, which you can reach via the Internet, no matter where you are.

The PEN can be regarded as a gigantic digital 'iceberg'. The visible part is the open structure the part which anyone can see when you connect and open the PEN icon to reach all the conferences, sub-conferences, sub-sub-conferences, etc.

This is actually only a minor bit of the network. The major part is made up of all the closed conferences that are visible only to their own participants. The individual user of the PEN can usually see and reach a number of the closed conferences, e.g. those belonging to the folk high schools or the study association in question - but these conferences still present only a fraction of the 'invisible' parts of the 'iceberg' which constitute the PEN. During the first half of the year 2000, the PEN has registered more than 15,000 users. The digital conferences amount to over 5,000.

The PEN is not a completely open network. To become a registered user you must have some connection to popular education as a student, a teacher, a monitor, an organisation representative or some similar tie.

A pedagogical tool

The PEN is used to a varying degree by the folk high schools and the study associations. The organisations that are major users, avail themselves of the network to build their own internal information - and conference - system. During a PEN-conference the participants can, so to say, enter and leave whenever they like, without disturbing anyone else - even if it's in the middle of the night.

A growing number of folk high schools and study associations also use the network as a pedagogical tool.

Popular education as distance learning

The most obvious pedagogical usage is perhaps to arrange a study circle or a folk high school course that, to a lesser or greater degree, is carried out at a distance. There are quite a few possible participants who, for one reason or the other, find it irksome to take part in 'ordinary' study circles or courses that are scheduled at regularly fixed hours. They might be shift workers, parents with small children, disabled people and others.

The PEN makes it feasible to arrange study circles and courses with, simultaneously, a high level of activity and a reduced number of "physical" meetings. Numerous pedagogical projects have been carried out over the last years in that fashion.

Create more meeting places

But the PEN can be used for many other purposes, e.g. to arrange digital meeting places for 'ordinary' study circles and courses. The participants can easily meet and stay in contact with each other between lessons.

First of all, you can create digital conferences for different study circles of the same subject matter, where the participants can meet and exchange ideas, no matter where they happen to be located geographically.

The communication and contacts between course participants don't have to end just because the study circle or course has ended and the participants have been scattered. There are many former folk high school students who stay in contact with each other and with former teachers through the PEN.

Subject orientated network

The activities of the study associations are first and foremost based upon the work of the committed study circle monitors. How often do they get a chance to meet other monitors working with similar subjects and learn from somebody else's experience?

On the PEN you can quickly and easily create subject orientated digital conferences or form a network where monitors who live in the countryside or in small villages can 'meet' monitors with similar interests from all over the country. The PEN has an "agora for study circle monitors" specially designed for these conferences. Similar conferences are run for the folk high school teachers.

In-service training

Education and in-service training for monitors is another possibility. It's a common plight for small local branches of study associations with limited resources and perhaps only part-time monitors to find the time and the money to fulfil their in-service training obligations.

Simple technique

The PEN is based upon a technology that is simple to use and easy to learn. No extensive manuals with hundreds of pages are needed; for the beginner there's a simple guide (15 pages) which explains what you need to know.

The PEN is not the Internet, but it uses the same network that connects the different parts of the Internet. This means that it's just as cheap to connect to the PEN as to surf on the Internet.

You can enter the PEN with any ordinary web software (such as Internet Explorer or Netscape) but the network functions best with a particular client program called FirstClass which is free of charge.

To become a client, to get your own "desk" on the screen, your own Mailbox and to be able to take part in conferences, you need a user name and a password.

For the person who is charged with the responsibility of acting as the local PEN administrator at a folk high school or a branch of a study association, some further know-how is needed. A special guide to create conferences and the like is available.

Easily adaptable

One of the major advantages of the PEN is that it can be adapted to differing needs both quickly and easily. A couple of new conferences for a network group or a distance course can be set up in just a few minutes - implying that the participants are linked with their proper conference authorities.

The technology used is also fashioned in such a way that those users who have slower Internet connections can still take part without having to wait for hours.

www.folkbildning.se (National Council for Adult Education)

The Swedish National Council for Popular Education

The Swedish National Council for Popular Education distributes government grants to Study Associations and Folk High Schools and is responsible for the administration of the Popular Education Network, among other things. The Council is a non-profit organisation with three member organisations: The National Federation of Study Associations, The Federation of County Councils and The Interest Organisation for Folk High Schools (RIO).

The National Federation of Study Associations is an interest group for the eleven different study associations; the Federation of County Councils represents those folk high schools that have county councils or local councils as their responsible authority; and RIO organises those folk high schools that have popular movements or other organisations as their responsible or directing organisations.

The public role in the development of Flexible Education

Mikael Andersson

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Introduction

The words we use to describe the different historical societies do often reflect the dominant economic factor in that society. Farms dominated the agricultural society, industry the industrial society, and so on. When we now enter into what we sometimes refer to as the information or knowledge society, the name points to the fact that information and knowledge will be the dominant economic factors in this society. In this society knowledge will play as important a role as did land in the agricultural society.

The impact of this change of societies will affect a number of actors, notably in the field of educational provision. But it will also change the role of the public, or the state, in relation both to the educational providers and the citizen / learner.

Lifelong learning

In this society the demands for education will change dramatically. The systems for education that belonged to the industrial society will no longer be sufficient. New systems have to be built. Some years ago *lifelong learning* was presented as the expression for the educational needs of this new society. Education was no longer something that was acquired only in the earlier days of life, to be later applied in employed work. Instead the new society would demand a readiness to continually upgrade and widen your knowledge and competence, both within the framework of an employment and in a more flexible work situation.

Most people support this view on the need for lifelong learning. But how is this demand going to be met? The current educational systems are not designed to meet this need. How is an employed person living far away from the established educational providers going to take part in lifelong learning? A system that demands of a person to leave home and work for longer or shorter periods to acquire educational resources does not fulfil the needs of lifelong learning.

Distance education

In Sweden *distance education* was presented as the solution to this problem during a couple of years. Sweden has a long (if not unbroken) tradition of distance education. Most families have some representative who got an education at Hermods (who celebrated its 100:th anniversary in 1998). In latter years many people have also studied at a distance within the framework of the Universities, the National Schools for Adults or at the Educational Broadcasting Company, UR

Information technology

The potential of distance education as a broad model for lifelong learning was even more accentuated when the new *Information and Communication Technology* entered the pedagogical arena. Some of the traditional problems with distance education, notably the lack of sufficient dialogue between student and tutor and interaction between students, could now be solved with the help of computers, electronic conference systems and video conferencing. *The third generation of distance education* was developed. In order to find out in what way the combination of distance education and new IT could contribute to lifelong learning the Swedish Ministry of Education and Science put together a special commission, *The Commission on Distance Education*, DUKOM in 1995.

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DUKOM

In the report of DUKOM it states, however, that only the combination of distance education and IT is not enough to offer lifelong learning to a wider target group. Distance education, with or without the support of IT, is a highly demanding form of study. Distance education requires a highly motivated and disciplined student, and even if the new technology offers some solutions to old pedagogical problems, the technology in itself is a problem for many people. Besides the fact that the technology sometimes is hard to use, it is also not generally available in homes. There is also a risk of a more or less permanent "lagging behind" of home technology compared to the technology being used by the educational providers: the latest technology solves *even more* educational problems, but the providers are being tempted to use the very latest version of hard- and software, not corresponding to the versions you find at peoples homes.

Flexible education

To be able to offer lifelong learning to a wide majority of the population, there is a need for something new, DUKOM stated. A system for *Flexible Education*. Flexible education is first and foremost characterised by the focus on the students' possibilities to adapt study models, content and study environment according to personal prerequisites. In flexible education there is no division between distance- and classroom education, but these forms of study can be joined together, depending on the needs and preferences of the student. Technical support for individual adaptation is being used. Co-operation between educational providers over traditional boundaries is increased to adapt the course content after the students needs.

A system for flexible education has to be able to answer three questions, three requirements, for the student:

When and where can I study?

What can I study?

How can I study?

In short, this model can be described as follows: First of all modern technology and developed methods in distance education are being used to assure the learners possibilities to study independent of time and place. The student is given the possibility to study "from wherever", at home, if preferred, at work when time allows, or a combination of both.

Secondly a new course model is applied. Courses have to be built by modules, that can be combined in different ways, allowing the student to design the course from the actual learning demand. In order to achieve maximum individualisation, the student must also be given the opportunity to combine modules from different course providers. Thus, the question "what" does not only contain the demand to study whatever subject, but also the demand for a more individualised course content and course design.

Finally virtual and physical study environments will be constructed in a way that allows a number of opportunities in relation to the learners' preferences and preconditions. A number of development projects in Sweden have pointed at the large demand of different types of local study centres where the learner can acquire both pedagogical and technical support. But also the learner who chooses to study alone at home must have equal opportunities to successful studies. Here the key answer is also an individualised situation on the basis of the learners' preferences and preconditions

The prime target for the flexible education model is to empower a lifelong learning for all, regardless of background or previous study skills. The development of a system for flexible education is as much a question of general equality policy as of educational policy.

Governmental initiatives after DUKOM

A very important statement of DUKOM was that the Swedish way of dealing with distance and flexible education would be to continue the "Dual Mode" system. Dual Mode in this context means that distance and flexible education should be provided by the same educational organisations that offer traditional classroom education. The opposite system can be found i.e. in the UK with Open University, or in Germany with Fernuniversität.

DUKOM's main argument for this statement was that flexible education will be best offered when classroom and distance education is combined, in accordance to the preferences of the student.

At that time the question arose what would be the public role in the development of flexible education. At first the plan was to assemble a national institute for development and production of flexible courses and course material. Later the organising committee for the institute redesigned this plan. Instead the institute, Swedish Agency for Distance Education, "Distum", should have as it's main objective to support the development of flexible education by supporting projects carried out by educational providers. The focus was shifted from production to development support, the main reason for this being that the Swedish tradition of course and material production is carried out regionally by the educational providers themselves.

Distum's objective is to support the development of IT supported flexible education in the field of higher education and non-formal education. For this purpose Distum has been equipped with a set of "tools", primarily a small but highly qualified staff of advisers, and with finances to economically support various development projects. The strategy for Distum is to identify various key elements in the realisation of flexi-

ble education. If facts surrounding one or more of these elements are inconclusive, Distum will implement research projects in the actual field. Important is to stress that Distum does not carry out research projects itself. Projects are to be carried out by the same organisations that actually offer education. This is in line with the above-mentioned principle of a Dual Mode system.

The Swedish system for adult education is traditionally divided into three branches:

- Higher education (universities and regional universities)
- Adult education (upper secondary and vocational training for adults)
- Non-formal education (study associations and folk high schools)

On the basis of this list it is simple to see that Distum's assignment covers only two of these three branches. The branch of adult education (there is a semantic mix-up between the general term, covering all three branches, and the specific term applying to upper secondary studies for adults) is not a part of Distum's assignment.

The responsibility for the development of flexible education in adult education is the concern of a special task force at the Ministry of Education. This task force has been operational since 1998 and uses the two National Schools for Adults to carry out development projects, aimed at producing support for the over 200 municipal upper secondary schools for adults. The general plan, however, is to transfer this responsibility to Distum, in order to get a coherent development strategy.

What you can see in this picture is a clear shift of role for the government in the field of distance and flexible education. The public (being the role of the state) is not to offer education, but to support the development of distance and flexible education. A consequence of the Dual Mode strategy.

The expectations from the creators of Distum and the task force, i.e. the Government and the Parliament, does not, however, fully agree with the assignment formulated for these bodies. Distum and the task force are expected to create preconditions for flexible education and a lifelong learning for adults. However, these expectations can not be fulfilled only by efforts aimed at stimulating educational providers to offer courses in a more flexible way.

The core of this argument is that it is not possible to achieve the goal, "a system for flexible education", only by supporting development within the ranks of existing educational providers. A number of "services" is aimed directly at the students and at those in search of education. Flexible education does not evolve only by changing or developing pedagogy and methods, but mainly through alterations on a system level, and the development of a public support system. In these changes the state has a vital role to play.

"Public Service" in education

In a simplified form one could say that the support system that needs to be developed could be carried out by a "Public Service" organisation in education. It is logical to call it Public Service, while the way services are offered is in many ways similar to the way the media Public Service companies work.

The characteristic features and motives for this view lies in the demand of an impartial support function without connections to any commercial interest. The best way to ensure this is a publicly funded base for these services, with the strict limitation that no commercial activities are involved. All organisations and companies should be able to make use of the services provided on equal terms.

The services provided should in an impartial fashion be offered to educational providers (including commercial ones), students and learners in search of education, publishers and other producers in the educational field. In the short-term the service should focus on the educational needs of enterprises, and in long-term also to provide for the need of a more common "citizen education".

In the reasoning around flexible education I have tried to describe what opportunities have to be offered to the learner in order to offer lifelong learning to a wider target group. These opportunities for the learner will have impact on a system level, and the result of this impact is also the mission of the Public Service organisation. Roughly there are four areas where the organisation should develop services:

- Educational guidance
- Validation of competence and skills
- Publishing house for course material and courses
- Platform for flexible and informal learning

Educational guidance

In a system for flexible education the learner has to be able to choose more freely between different courses, course modules and educational providers. All in order to make the content of the education or learning more relevant and more just-in-time. A problem that will evolve as a result of this is that a large number of courses and course modules will see the light of day. The question is: how will the learner find his way in this jungle of various offers?

An essential service for a system of flexible education will be a guidance system, a "broker" between supply and demand in the educational field. This service must work in both ways, i.e. guide learners to relevant courses, as well as point out to educational providers when sought-after courses are lacking. The latter role can be developed into a commissioning function when courses not rapidly enough in demand are being produced.

Validation of competence and skills

A phenomenon that will evolve in a system where the learner can design the "compilation" of his studies is the need of independent validation. A "course" that the learner considers to be relevant and the exact match to his needs can be an impossible mix of modules from an educational provider's viewpoint. Since validation of a learners knowledge in today's system is carried out by the responsible educational provider, it will prove very hard (if not impossible) to get an educational provider to validate a course that has been put together by a variety of more or less coherent pieces. It will prove even more difficult when modules combined from a variety of educational providers can form the "course" together.

Since validation is so closely connected to the educational provider it is also hard to get a validation of knowledge acquired in another way than by curriculum bound studies. Knowledge acquired through practical work or alternative studies is very hard to validate.

A service providing a function for independent validation of competence and skills is therefore essential. The core function in this service would be to develop instruments for validation of knowledge and competence acquired in alternative ways. Another crucial factor in this work would also be to establish relatively fast a "market value" of the issued certificate.

Publishing House for courses and course material

In Sweden there is currently a "Catch 22" in the areas of adult education and enterprise-adapted education. Development of course models and course material is slow. This is mainly due to the fact that the demand for flexible courses is not that great. When investigating why the demand is low, you find that the reason is - lack of courses and course material.

The Public Service organisation should take responsibility in gathering, commissioning and publishing a bank of course modules and course material in the field of flexible education. The content in this bank should not be full courses, but rather vital modules that allow the use of various base material.

The use of material from this bank should be free of charge for all parties involved, including commercial companies

Platform for flexible and informal learning

A very delicate quite important topic, is the question concerning technological platforms for flexible learning. In Sweden this is one of the areas where most of the commercial activity is found. Public intervention in this field is thus very delicate. In the field of non-formal education, there has been a public intervention in Sweden. In 1996 DUKOM and the Foundation for Knowledge and Competence (KK-stiftelsen) financed the founding of the Adult Education Network (Folkbildningsnätet) in Sweden. The main reason for this being the fact that a large number of study associations and folk high schools were prepared to invest large sums of money to purchase in different technological platforms, one for each organisation. These platforms could not communicate with each other, which had divided the non-formal education area into a large number of solitary islands in the field of flexible education. The above-mentioned parties intervened to avoid this situation, creating a joint platform for all non-formal education organisations.

This situation is again at hand, but in the larger field of adult education. A large number of municipalities are prepared to invest money in different platforms, and the uncertainty is growing. Therefore there is once again the need for public intervention. Maybe not to provide the ultimate solution, but to offer a platform for adult education to train on, while building enough knowledge to choose the right platform for their needs.

There is one more reason for a publicly financed educational platform. An already privileged target group is consuming a large part of the resources educational providers are putting into developing more flexible learning options. The majority of students in flexible learning are persons who are well qualified for self-study courses. Due to the fact that there is only a limited number of flexible courses available, these learners "occupy" the majority of these courses. These persons also claim to be less interested in the possibilities of collaborative learning that new educational methods provide.

This target group could benefit from a platform for informal learning. On this platform it should be possible for everybody to communicate, open discussion groups and so on. Course material from the above-mentioned course bank should be available for free. In this way, this specific group of learners could create their own self-study environment, and after having finished their studies they could get validation from the above-mentioned validating function.

Thus, also this target group would benefit, mainly by increased flexibility. The learners with lower study skills would also benefit, as more of the resources from the educational providers could be targeted at their needs.

Other areas of public interest

It is obvious that the development of flexible education is a complex matter. To get more clarity in the topic it could be of value to present other areas of public interest from another angle. One way of doing this is to do it in a "poetic" manner. In this context the poetic way is to use the parameters Pedagogy, Organisation, Economy and Technology (POET) as a starting point.

Pedagogy

Development of modern methods for distance education is one of the key factors to achieve a system for flexible education. The combination of modern pedagogy with various kinds of technological support supplies the foundation for an effective system for flexible education. It is therefore vital that the government guarantees funding for a range of development projects.

Organisation

The system in Sweden shows a strict division between different adult education organisations. This impedes the growth of flexible education. Increased co-operation over traditional boundaries between educational providers is an absolute necessity. Current regulations as well as attitudes between organisations are practical obstacles for this co-operation. An important task for the government is to revise the current regulations in order to provide a better foundation for the development of flexible education.

Economy

The current economical system also impedes the development of flexible education. The system is more aimed at providing educational organisations with conditions to offer good education, than providing learners with good conditions to learn.

Technology

Development of information and communication technology is extremely fast. A large number of new possibilities for increased learning have been and will be developed. A problem with the rapid development is, however, that it doesn't rhyme with the development of new pedagogical methods. The expression "IT is the answer, but what was the question?" is valid in the field of flexible education. One great responsibility for the public body is to create good preconditions for an increased co-operation between pedagogues and technicians. Otherwise there is a great risk that technology will govern the development of pedagogy, not the other way around.

Conclusion

What we can see is that the development of a system for flexible education is a vital precondition for a lifelong learning for all. This system must offer opportunities for competence provision for enterprises, as well as the individuals' needs of knowledge for an active citizenship. The flexible education can however not be created through occasional measures in specific areas, it builds on a chain of events where one event affects the other. Development is necessary, from system level down to course level. The public role in this development is crucial, as we are talking about a shift of paradigm. Therefore it is very important to define the public role in this development. A number of different forces and interests are active in the ongoing development, and it is crucial that the government acts in a way that these forces are stimulated and not suppressed. Much effort must therefore be put into defining when the public role is to provide the solutions, or to create good preconditions for the development of solutions.

www.distum.se (Swedish Agency for Distance Education)

List of used abbreviations:

NCPE	National Council on Popular Education
Distum	Swedish Agency for Distance Education
DUKOM	Commission on Distance Education
PEN	Popular Education Network
KKS	Foundation for Knowledge and Competence

1st generation of Distance Education:	correspondence courses
2nd generation of DE:	technology
3rd generation of DE:	combination of both, "dual mode" + tuition

AUSTRIA

An evaluative approach towards project management

Alfred Lang and Gitta Stagl

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When the Burgenländische Forschungsgesellschaft and Alfred Lang as their representative were asked to co-ordinate the REREAL project back in 1997 they were reluctant to accept, knowing what it meant to shoulder such a task. As Burgenländische Forschungsgesellschaft we have had experiences with co-ordinating research projects and initiating and running symposia with guests from across the country, field specialists from Hungary, Slovak Republic, Czech Republic, Italy, Switzerland, co-operating with initiatives with various background cultures. We have been organising and realising a concept of Burgenland research day for the last 12 years, with 2000 being the 13th in a line. Our last Research day was dedicated to the connection between the global, the regional and the local. In accordance with the charta of our foundation in 1987 we have always tried to initiate projects in the field of social and cultural study and the humanities dealing with regional and interregional problems, including the local micro-cosmos. We have always seen ourselves and have been gradually seen as such within the regional and transregional landscape as a platform for realising research and educational projects.

When we started with our work in the late eighties we were above all interested in bringing back academics who had left their nest on behalf of studying and finishing university to the Burgenland where they were needed and sought for. Another thing was to find a more effective way of bringing together people from communities, villages, streets with educationists and the concept of evening classes in the regional and at that time very centralised adult education sector.

Problems of the region, the low level of education, the high rate of commuting and unemployment, the region as a location at the periphery, living at the border, the co-existence between the majority language (Austrian, and three minority languages - Hungarian, Croatian and Romanes), to name just a few topics of research, investigation and surveys. We have collected a lot of valuable experiences and data on the development of the regional landscape, one of the main things we learnt through our co-operation with adult educationist from different adult education institutions - sometimes fighting over principles - and co-working side by side with researchers deeply engaged in their topics but sometimes up in arms about the formal and mental stubbornness of institutional patina. We have been observing different cultures of working - young enthusiastic researchers freshly degreed and people deeply rooted in their rural surrounding. A given curiosity and a welcome for the touring people after 1989 and then the shadowy side of paranoid reaction towards the changing world around us in the disguise of xenophobia and resentment.

We have always strived to keep cool and calm amidst the startled and sometimes turbulent process of meeting, of arranging, of co-operating, of pacing and last but not least finding the sufficient financial sources. We have had to manage with cuts in fundings and were sometimes surprised by new project opportunities - where we finally felt we had become a foundation stone and in the course the addressing partner for projects covering or arising from the region.

We have experienced projects where work was mainly executed by specialists and included the collocation of data and interviewing people.

Whenever time and money allowed for this we have tried to disseminate results by publishing. We have experienced projects where people from different regional parts in Europe have brought in and reflected on their work, for instance - *Mit Sprachen leben. Praxis der Mehrsprachigkeit*. Celovec, Drava Verlag, Ulrike Pröll, Werner Holzer (ed.).

We are at the moment responsible for the co-ordination of two very demanding projects - one is a research project on the situation of the Roma and Sinti minority in Burgenland and their fate from 1945 - 1999. The treatment of the Romani is a continuing history of disrespect and disreputation. It has taken till 1993 for them to become officially acknowledged and it took the fiercest, terroristic attack on four Romani to shake politicians out of their complacency attitude. The project will research for the first time ever what happened to the Romani who had escaped extinction by Fascism and had come back to the Burgenland. There will be interviews with experts on the actual living conditions, job situation and housing and the research work will result in a catalogue of purposeful measures for improving their situation.

The second on-going project is a multilingual radio for children - Radio za dicu. The project is driven by the idea that languages can't survive when they are "privatised" and excluded from the public debate. The project focuses on the use of Croatian in everyday language and broadcasting. The project is so to say accompanied by a quality control process: we have arranged experiential exchanges with radio designers for a sort of modern Latin (a language spoken in some valleys in Southern Europe), Ladinic and Raeto-Roman. This and the qualitative interviewing of educationists will be made under the supervision of the children. They will also have the opportunity to do their evaluation.

Back to REREAL by describing our own background and expertise and some aspects of our actual work. We look upon ourselves as initiators or chaperones of research work, we see to the organisational framework conditions - including financing and accounting, connecting with service and executive partners - we pick the right people as project managers or project manageresses and see that they have the facilities for their work: resources, connections, sites, networking. This is were we play a singular role in the science research and education landscape and this is were we define our expert specialist side and our specific know-how. In the course of our specialisation we have come upon a lot of techniques termed as evaluation and have tried to find our own way of seeing to evaluation without forgetting the specific content and context standards and aims given. We look upon our role as co-ordinators as having the necessary distance, overview and involvement to be able to clarify and to

differentiate between what and how we measure success and effectiveness and how we look at and after the on-going work in terms of quality. Our experiences and our work with people from very different institutions and with completely different motives has given us - so we think - the essential feeling for diplomacy and discretion to stay neutral and detached enough while at the same time staying loyal to the on-going process and its necessities and dynamics. We have seen to a safeguarding system when projects seem to be combined with too many centrifugal forces in order to stabilise them with what is initially aimed for. This way of thinking made us say yes to the project after we had agreed with others to form a co-ordinating team made of three representatives from different Austrian institutions. We have had years of fertile co-operation with the Förderungsstelle, a co-ordinating federal institution always keen on merging the different capacities and options viable for traditional as well as innovating and margin institution. Margarete Wallmann has always been aware of the fact that the outsider in contrast to long-term institutions has that flair of extra something necessary for getting attitudes and structures to allow for a range of motion. Another constituent factor for us coming from the most backward and "forgotten" part of Austria: It is a good opportunity to make ourselves understood and to bring our situation forward and to raise awareness for meeting needs and introducing new forms. Convinced that with Lernfeld Sprache and Gitta Stagl the project content was seen to and that the relevant disseminating and networking activity with educationists and education authorities was seen to by Margarete Wallmann we felt our task consisted of two things: securing the necessary administrative and financial framework conditions - not at all an easy task and bringing partners to go in accordance with rules of eligibility - and securing the quality standards. With the backing of the Co-ordinating Team (CT) we insisted on following a set of evaluating procedures - from the beginning onwards. At the beginning of a project, after the first euphoria has vanished - there is the long and hard walk to come to terms with the centrifugal development of things. Documentation and regular meetings, exchange of impressions and problematisation were measure number one. This very doing allowed us to keep track of what weighed what in evaluation: Sorting out group dynamics and obligations, sorting out language and money problems, sorting out stagnation in understanding, meeting deadlines, keeping promises. All these things were put on the agenda of CT (Co-ordinating Team) and then measure number two followed. The dynamic and forces at work in the group sometimes made of up to 17 persons from 8 different countries seemed to go on working by imploding in the CT. We were clear about that. We had to have a learn-supervision as a kind of external evaluation with immediate internal assessment. The team-supervision turned out to be of tremendous help both as a tool for calming down inside storms - of course nothing personal - simply the tremendous work load and the differences of timing in the group building process. The team-supervision allowed us to look at things from the outside and to take it cool without stepping down or resigning in content matters. We came to accept the different forces at work and to meet them on different levels and with different means - without blaming the individual persons involved or blaming everything on others or ourselves. It was out of this raised sphere of awareness about what we could do and were we had to let go that we decided to call in an external evaluator. We had pre-negotiated what we wanted the external evaluator to look at: project work and project outcomes, group work and group development and team work and effect on the former two. We have learned through our work in non-defined or definable research courses and

project courses that openness and flexibility are not merely words in the context of jargon and journalistic language, but we have experiences that openness is asked from us in order to maintain our role as platform, co-ordinator and bottom-to-top transmitter of viable lines of researching, of impact for the region and its inhabitants.

So, all the processes of external as well as internal evaluation had to show conformity with what has been the common goal in the overall project work of REREAL: disclosing the many dimensions of openness and flexibility in learning, including the dimension of how this process gets going, develops its own time-measure for going, shows specific traits - which can't be foreseen but must be seen to - react to unpredictable curves and bends and flows with the development without losing directions. An interdisciplinary research institute known for its expertise and continuous development in the field of quality control and process monitoring was asked to act as an external evaluator. In four subsequent meetings a list of demands was developed, demands on ourselves as a CT, demands on each member of the CT, demands listed in the project aims and outcomes, demands in terms of European partnership and cohesion. We had learned a lot about detaching ourselves from too high flying expectations during the first half year of project work, we had learned a lot about organisation and financial concerns of partners and the time consumed by tackling these. We had learned a lot - from outside observation and inside action - about the different time pressures and resource pressures on partners and on partnership work. We wanted the evaluation to form a part of the steering process and the group making process, we wanted to gain tools for tackling problems manifest and we wanted the group to understand more about the dynamics of the process and their role as active participants. Step 1 was also the development of a set of operative questions, partners were asked about expectations, aspirations and actual involvement, about support in their home-institution and other support found essential. Step 1 was also thought to involve partners into the collaborative making of the final report. We wanted to find out what were the obstacles in partnership work. The second step was a kind of self-reflexive evaluation in the form of coupled pairs of partners, they were to interview each other on how they found the project going, whether they were content. It turned out that the self-reflecting activity which shone through in partners' work and clarity did not transfer properly when seen with external eyes not familiar with the inner process. What we did with what had come to the foreground in Step 1 and Step 2 was to bring this back into the work process - we integrated what we had found out about financing, time, resources and language and made it part of our way to intervene and to suggest and to proceed. We were affirmed in our attitude by what we experienced in Norwich. The external evaluation took place in the form of workshop-like interviews with the project consortium and included as a fourth step the participatory observation of the external evaluator. We got his feedback. It highlighted many of the aspects we had already found out to be the hinges, were the doors either run smoothly or block. We had to cope with differences, seen as distances by the project manageress, stemming from national background, institutional framework conditions, in-between change of partners, more or less experience in process orientated work. What the evaluative report demonstrated to us as the co-ordinating team was the fact that much of the developmental aspect was depending on the frequency and quality of horizontal interaction: interaction floating openly among partners. What partners had found positive although sometimes ambiguous - was the innova-

tive and demanding character of project and project management. What we had perceived, at first with growing self-doubt and then with growing understanding for the distance aspect and the applicability of openness, was the evident shift between work intensity at meetings, promising aspirations and plans there and actual delivery in product form. We brought our rich harvest of evaluative insights back into our team supervision and through this door back to the project. We began to be aware how essential the final report would be for making things better visible, for the consortium and for future co-operation with the manual.

It was then that we decided to become initiative as a co-ordinating team. Each of us was to shoulder a different task. We re-developed and re-fined our interior vision of labour. The co-ordinator acted on his own in terms of making things manageable. Margarete Wallmann became more active in the field of horizontal interaction. The project manageress concentrated more on content work, thus she could be more flexible in terms of leaving space for the complexity and still directing through clarity and structure. The co-ordinating team actually witnessed how all the elements regarded as catalysts made the project work more effective and the project management smoother, if still very intensive. The extension of our work for another year and the manual *Towards a Framework in OFL* are looked upon as positive signs and repercussions for the road we have taken in evaluating.

A modular concept for training of adult education trainers and facilitors and the development of a network for guidance and training for guidance workers

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Margarete Wallmann

Expansion of regional education centres

The first consideration towards an improvement of the situation of continuing education was concerned with shortening the commuting time for potential course participants. Until the mid-nineties 17,2 % of the participants in the Burgenland had to accept more than two hours of commuting to attend the courses. So an expansion of regional centres of Adult Education was carried out, the opening of regional offices in the Southern and Northern Burgenland. At first regional centres of the regional branch for promoting Adult Education in the Burgenland and the *Volksbildungswerk* (community-based branch of Adult Education) were established in Oberwart (S) and Halbturn (N). These regional agencies had to fulfil various tasks:

- Educational guidance and information about offers in the immediate vicinity
- Motivating those who are interested to develop and implement need-orientated educational offers in co-operation with the full-time pedagogical staff from the associations
- Contact point and office for honorary and part time pedagogical staff, provision of office infrastructure and guidance in conference planning and management
- conference centre for seminars, courses and lectures.

These impulses to words structural innovation did not happen without friction. The plan to develop a co-operative model of Adult Education was an attempt by the regional branch for the promotion of adult education of the Adult Education association and the department of Adult Education of the BM to extend the multifaceted but also fragmented institutional landscape of Adult Education into a more efficient system of providers. By co-ordinating and establishing a network of the existent resources three main targets were to be achieved: possibilities to access educational offers were to cover the provincial region; the planning and organising of functions, courses, seminars and lectures was to be more professional; concerning the access to continuing education the equality of opportunity was to be improved. But the budget situation never allowed any generous considerations about overcoming institutional barriers - only a few institutions and their projects received support. Since the federal offices appeared as initiators and supporters protecting their own structural and political interests, the people from the Burgenland met them with scepticism. This situation did not necessarily strengthen the co-operation and the mutual trust, it

rather prolonged the until then distant relationship between supporter and institution. The two regional offices were the first attempt to co-operate on a structural level. The problem here was to promote the set-up of more decentralised offices without destroying the already existing local structures of education. The 15 local folk high schools and the *Volksbildungswerk* (which exists in almost every community), already have a grown honorary structure. The honorary employees are an important contact for the communities, they ensure need orientation and continuity. Certain conflicts were also programmed to happen: the inclusion of honorary staff into the planning of activities as well as a remuneration system, which should not create two classes of employees, should be reconsidered.

Because or in spite of these and other problems the representatives of the institutions view the development of regional centres as positive:

1. The staff in the regional offices can bring major innovations to the region. Expansions of the "usual" course offers can be planned and carried out according to need orientation, so that projects about socio-political subjects or specific requests of the region will be able to reach new target groups.
2. By setting up networks between educational institutions, cultural initiatives and groups in the region new target groups and new ways of collaboration between culture, education and social work can be discovered.
3. The image of the institution as a service centre for implementing educational requests was improved. More and more people recognise the need for education, they suggest programmes, co-operate actively on the spot and become promoters of education.
4. The barriers of the population against the headquarters were overcome by regional centres; they have become something like a mediating authority between region and headquarters.
5. The regional agencies are both contact point and advice service for the part time staff (course leaders). This direct contact and the possibility of having conversations about specific educational work contribute considerably to ensure the quality of the offer.

Concerning the content-related work of the regional centres, the *Regionalstelle Süd* (respective branch of folk high school in the South Burgenland) which is supposed to cover the need of the poorest and most underdeveloped region, shifted one of its focuses to political and cross-cultural education work. Co-operative education projects with Gypsy-representatives about their culture and their everyday-situation in life were carried out, courses for the revival of their traditional language and for second chance attempts for certified qualification were initiated as well.

By using target 1 support from the EU new and improved measures for continuing and qualified education were created in the following areas:

- Education service and guidance
- Regional educational offers
- Key qualifications
- 2nd chance education, a complete course offer for the South Burgenland

Another main emphasis was laid on the promotion of language skills because on one hand there was and still is a very big need for catching up on things in this region while on the other hand the diversity of languages in the region (having a Hungarian and a Croatian minority) and the geographical situation mainly since the opening of the borders are more or less an invitation to study languages. An expansion and a growing complexity of the language learning offers are visible. For certain subjects, for instance Business English, intensive courses have been organised and there are certificate courses finishing with the acquisition of a language certificate. All this is offered in various forms and shapes, weekend or holiday courses, lecture blocks, small groups, individual lessons or language courses within enterprises (Technical English and Hungarian). In the border towns language courses are offered, where inhabitants along and beyond the border can learn the language from each other. It is obvious that - if the participants are to be looked after by well trained and committed professionals - a regular continuing education of the course leaders will be required.

Utilising the potential of alternative learning forms has proved very fruitful, especially in the field of second chance education. The second chance sector of Adult Education has become very popular recently. In general it amounts to second chance attempts for certified qualifications - from the GSCE-exams to the tailor-made A-level forms vocational A-levels and University entrance examinations and to external general upper secondary exams which are especially suited for vocational re-orientation and continuing education. These alternative learning forms allow to take down those hurdles and problems which have made second chance attempts for exams difficult up to now. It is obvious that this offer is extremely important for such a little developed area.

Other than the traditional theories the alternative learning forms focus on the improvement of access to offers, materials and relevant professional guidance. It is an attempt to arrange the learning environment, the supply with necessary material and the structuring of the act of learning as user-friendly as possible. The living and working conditions of the learner have to be considered, but most of all bridging offers have to be created helping the learner to make the most of his/her previous experiences and to make the best use of previously acquired knowledge. It is the task of the teachers to provide the learners with excellent guidance by means of their expertise and their pedagogical-didactical know how. Such an offer certainly requires a change in thinking as well as working with new structures from the part of the providing institution and from the learners. In a way the two headquarters, Eisenstadt in the North, Oberwart in the South, are orientated towards this direction: they all offer finishing exams, while part exams can be taken in Güssing (S) and Halbtturn (N). Information about all these possibilities can be obtained at regularly scheduled meetings in the 7 districts of the region.

The physical structures of the region suggest the introduction of *open and distant learning forms*: the institutions attempt with their initiatives to decrease the distance to the learners and to leave a variety of accesses open to them. Moreover, new technologies as well as self study offers allow to overcome time and space distances and still ensure the necessary learning support. Right now the use of self study materials for German and English is being tested in two current courses within the framework of

a pilot project. In a parallel effort through workshops and individual guidance the course leaders receive continuous support and continuing education enabling them to cope with their tasks. Additionally approaches to telematically supported learning offers are planned in the near future.

Testing the above mentioned learning forms has shown how essential the acquisition of *key skills* is for learning and working. Some of these key skills are: already developed reading and writing skills, differentiated communicative competencies, the ability of self-evaluation and self reflection and the ability of self orientation in the face of new tasks. The main focus is on:

- Communication and conflict management
- Development of personality
- Marketing and public relations
- Economy and tourism
- Political education and community-based work

Moreover, courses for and within enterprises are organised (telephone marketing, for example), training courses for guidance in social and everyday problems and for social counsellors, a course supporting adoptive parents and special courses for disadvantaged target groups, like elementary education tailor-made for adults and learning support for Gypsy children or integration courses for foreigners. And the projects for political and cross-cultural education should also be mentioned, especially the one devoted to prejudice and racism which was awarded with the Ludwig Hartmann prize only recently.

The major part of arranging and organising these courses is achieved in local centres, mainly by honorary employees. The advantage of these local centres is obvious: the work is done by long term and continually active groups of good social cohesion. They know the wishes and needs of the local population and can be flexible towards them. Their main offers include: health, creativity, languages, economy and IT. The Folk high school of the Burgenland alone is in charge of 15 of these institutions, 13 of them being independent local centres while two are concerned with the needs of the Croatian and/or the Hungarian minorities. Another folk high school only for Gypsies is in a planning stage.

General advice and guidance for education and more specified labour market orientated guidance in the regional offices of the folk high schools

The urgent need for action in the Burgenland to recognise the necessity of learning certain abilities has been mentioned before. It was also mentioned that the employees as well as the employers are sometimes short of this insight. The readiness of the employees for continuing education and for finding qualified staff in the region is an important prerequisite for establishing new and most of all innovative enterprises. Both sides underestimate some of the qualification areas and do not question them, although it is clear that their importance will increase in the future. And there was - at least until recently - a remarkable lack of information about the existing offers in continuing education on both sides.

The term educational guidance means more than just the simple act of giving out information, although this is certainly an important part of it. But this is not enough, the important point is to make the situation of advice-seekers transparent, to go deeper and to deal with the way they live their lives as well as with questions about especially suited ways of education. Educational guidance embraces fields as diverse as school guidance, training guidance, continuing education guidance, their differences lying in the target groups, contents and aims. In specialised literature we often find that educational guidance is divided in two big parts: qualification guidance which is understood mainly as enterprise related - its target being the staff development in enterprises - and the continuing education guidance primarily related to the person (coaching and mentoring for learning, career guidance etc.). Practice has shown so far that educational guidance in the institutions of the Burgenland is used primarily in the form of guidance for continuing education.

The above mentioned urgent need for action in the region led to the decision to enforce guidance activities and to create a kind of contact point guidance: for the successful implementation of any concrete qualification measures efforts must be and have been made to change the old, deep set approaches and views. By enhancing guidance activities and initiating qualification networks new continuing education offers are to be created. Guidance and the setting up of a network of smaller enterprises as well as the co-ordination with providers of educational programmes were an attempt to develop a continuing education network tailor-made for the needs of the region, the enterprises and the work force. The planned qualification networks, on one hand between the enterprises and on the other between enterprises and continuing education institutions, are an important foundation for the existing SMEs in the region since they are hardly capable of organising sufficient continuing education measures within the enterprises by themselves and out of their own strength.

A special field for guidance activity and for the creation of relevant qualification offers is the establishment and expansion of tourist regions. The new establishment of tourist regions has required a differentiated know how and most of all the development of client-orientated consciousness, service quality and a readiness for communication and co-operation. Only through co-operation with those concerned and step by step an appropriate client-orientated consciousness can get started.

Apart from promoting the set-up of more decentralised branches of educational counselling a stronger emphasis on more specified labour market orientated guidance in enterprises and firms in the Burgenland and on continuing education programmes appropriate to their needs (joint development of enterprise-orientated qualification plans for individual enterprises or qualification networks) became the new and extremely important focus for the future.

These activities were supported by the National employment action plan which emphasises the necessity of close co-operation among continuing education institutions on one hand and employees and employers on the other. The plan considers the vocational A-level as a first step to broaden the path of higher qualification for graduates of the dual system and of the vocational further education colleges (kind of a vocational plus-15 school). Other approaches included in the action plan:

- Free educational guidance and information
- Benefit from synergies through co-operation
- Creation of regional multi-functional education centres
- Promotion of equality of opportunities
- Establishing programmes for improved access to Adult/continuing education in regions with little support and for disadvantaged persons.

This educational guidance in the folk high schools in the Burgenland exists since the summer of 1996. Its activities led to innovations within the preparatory courses for the external general upper secondary exam, the *Beamtenaufstiegsprüfung* (a less demanding version of the Austrian A-level, tailor-made for clerical work in government institutions) and the University entrance exams; they are concerned with a new orientation towards more openness of the learning process in those very formal fields of study to approach the target of higher self responsibility and self organisation (*open learning*). An implementation of the following measures was started to achieve this goal:

1. Expansion and quality improvement of guidance activity with course participants and course leaders
 - Better understanding of learning conditions, learning competencies, expectations and needs of the participants
 - Course leaders promote the learning process through stronger orientation towards enhanced self-organisation of the participants
2. Organisation and Co-ordination of smaller groups (4-6 participants)
 - Instead of meeting regularly with the course leaders scheduled meetings suiting the needs and the individual time resources are arranged
 - The course-leaders' individual attention to questions and problems of the participants leads to greater efficiency - less learning units in face-to-face teaching (leaving more time for independent learning) are more economical, both for the participants and for the institution
3. Orientation towards usage and evaluation of existing self learning materials.

Target group-orientated Open Continuing Education for experts

The meaning and the necessity of continuing education has been discussed amply. Certainly this necessity also concerned and still concerns those active in continuing education in the Burgenland. Accordingly the Conference of Adult Education in the Burgenland set new impulses in 1997 towards more professionalism in the educational institutions by initiating and finally organising *a course for training and continuing education of staff in vocational, entrepreneurial and general continuing education*. Important didactic, methodological and communicative competencies were conveyed in a 1 ½ year course. To be more precise, the course was concerned with the development of

- group-related leading qualities
- social steering- and intervention-competencies
- enhancing methodical creativity and imagination.

The course was designed by the IFF (Institute for cross-disciplinary research and continuing education of the Universities of Innsbruck, Klagenfurt and Vienna) and TOPS Berlin (Training, Organisation development, Personnel development, Supervision), it included 12 two-to-five-days blocks and concluded with a certificate. The subjects of the seminar showed a relatively broad variety, from "Teaching and learning in and with groups" to "Conception and organisation of educational encounters", from three didactics blocks to important focuses like "Labour and education market in the Burgenland" and "Conflicts and problematic situations in education". Moreover, the course participants had to develop a continuing education project at their workplace and carry it out corresponding to the course contents.

The course was combined with accompanying research. It was simultaneously serving as an evaluation and as a means to investigate the experiences and assessments of the participants and trainers regarding the course. It turned out to be viewed as very successful and the participants felt they had acquired an instantly useful tool and had a personal benefit from it.

The evaluation furnished important pieces of advice for the continuation of the course. For a target group orientated further development a 3-step modular concept was suggested, with a starting step and two build up steps. Thus in 1999 a flexible model emerged, able to cope anytime with the needs of the demand (Adult Education institutes and enterprises):

1. A basic course-unit to develop foundations of education work, suited for people who are not yet experienced in seminar-like and self reflective learning forms. Here they have the opportunity to receive a solid tool for their work and find out at the same time whether this form of Continuing Education is interesting enough for them to become even more qualified.
2. A course-unit building up on this, conveying Continuing Education competence.
3. A series of modular course-units for Continuing Education based on the two former ones, sort of a "train-the-trainer"-course.

Another constituent in training and continuing education of the experts is a trans-regional course for educational guidance officers. It is an attempt to furnish the concept of educational guidance with an appropriately qualified foundation and to utilise these experiences from various fields of Adult Education for the differentiation of the guidance offers.

With the two courses and the Continuing Education modules a Continuing Education system appropriate for the needs of Adult Educationists in the region was created that could and should be developed. In co-operation with the Federal Institute of Adult Education and those initiators and agents already active in the field so far a continuation and institutionalisation is considered, maybe even the foundation of a Continuing Education Academy. Like before the financial part will be shouldered by supportive measures from the federal government, the provincial government and the EU.

Trans-institutional network system guidance and establishment of a network for educational guidance officers

Still another constituent of the co-operative development project "Educational guidance Burgenland" is the scientific accompanying of the project, leading to two expert meetings about this subject in June and December 1999. They were supposed to lay the foundation for future efforts to establish educational guidance covering the area and in a trans-institutional form in the whole region. The present situation in this sector was examined and discussed. Although the invited institutions differed remarkably from each other - concerning both their target groups and the importance of the educational sector within their activities - guidance-seekers can still be divided into similar categories:

- Vocational further and continuing education and training: in many institutions the main focus of guidance activity is on this area. The requests range from guidance concerning the choice of school, profession and training and continuing education offers for a new start (re-qualification courses, additional qualifications, job-applications) to support in the search for professional re-orientation and career planning.
- General Adult Education: guidance with regard to language courses, leisure, health, personal continuing education etc.
- General information: many guidance-seekers want a general overall picture of possibilities of education, but also information about concrete course offers (for example course programmes).
- Specific problems: concerns mainly institutions with specific target groups, for example: solicitors for children and adolescents are confronted with youth-specific questions, farmers turn to the rural continuing education institute with certain problems etc.

Although the guidance-seeking groups are heterogeneous the forms of guidance are quite similar. In most cases it is a mixed form of the following guidance activities (the sequence corresponds to the frequency of naming):

1. Conversation: this is an important part of guidance activity in all institutions. It ranges from information via telephone to personal conversations during which all possibilities of continuing education are discussed, including the personal, economic and social facts. Many institutions also provide the possibility of extended opening hours in the evening for additional advice and guidance.
2. Information material: brochures, specialised literature, addresses and phone numbers of educational institutions are in high demand.
3. New information technologies: many institutions use new technologies in the form of search engines for independent search procedures and provide information and advice-software or support guidance officers with data banks, mainly the BUKEB Educational Data Bank "Education in the Burgenland - see below. Presently only a few guidance-seekers request course offers via Internet.
4. Informative encounters: the organisation of informative encounters in the form of lectures, seminars, group guidance (mainly for students) and conferences are an up to now popular and efficient form of guidance.
5. Cross-references: the specialisation of various institutions towards certain target groups and contents often makes it necessary to refer guidance-seekers to the appropriate institutions.

As far as the structure of the guidance-seekers at the trans-institutional guidance centre established in May 1998 is concerned a statistical evaluation of last year showed the following results: 75 % of the clients are women between 16 and 50 years of age. About half of them are unemployed and receive educational information and guidance, in addition to the counselling at the unemployment agency. Clients of the guidance centre are "re-starters" trying to increase their knowledge; adolescents after successful finishing exams or drop outs looking for training and continuing education possibilities corresponding to their interests; people who are dissatisfied with their present job situation and who look for improvement or vocational re-orientation through continuing education; people interested in education who are engaged in their personal continuing education.

An important point on the agenda of the expert meeting in December was the presentation and afterwards the discussion of a research plan concerning the "Bildungsberatung Burgenland" (Educational Guidance Burgenland): apart from developing theoretical foundations, the representation of ongoing theoretical discussions and the critical incorporation of the history of educational guidance in Austria, the situation of educational guidance in the Burgenland will be ascertained. The discussion brought new impulses that will leave their mark in the questionnaires which the respective institutions will receive from January 2000 on.

Also in connection with this project the Newsletter Bildungsberatung Burgenland (Newsletter Educational Guidance Burgenland), published bi-monthly since October 1999, came into being. It is supposed to be a medium for information exchange among educational guidance officers as well as between them and the scientific research team continuously monitoring the project design. It includes short infos, recent dates, web sites and references to literature.

Establishment of an extendable educational data bank

In the last decade the availability of knowledge about institutions and meetings has greatly increased. The work in educational guidance institutions was originally supported mainly by brochures and other written info material, but from 1993 on the provision of information reached a new dimension with the foundation of an organisation called EBIS - *Erwachsenenbildungs-Informationsservice* (Adult Education Information Service). This organisation managed to assemble an educational data bank for Austria which in the end contained 25.000 offers. It was regularly seen to and had a subject catalogue, a collocated headline reference system organised along a restricted and unified coding system. Educational offers were easy to retrieve that way. Until October 1997 EBIS informed about educational offers for adults via telephone hotline and then forwarding material for free and neutral as far as the suppliers were concerned. At the end of 1997 EBIS was closed down due to financial reasons.

Finally in April 1998 the approximately 1.700 educational data of continuing education providers in the Burgenland were recorded, based on the know how of EBIS. Commissioned by the Conference for Adult Education in the Burgenland (BUKEB) the data were made accessible via Internet. It was about time because those interested in continuing education had already complained that there was little to inexact information about the offers in Adult Education. No wonder, since the number of

offers is high, the offers are diverse and dynamical and individuals looking for education cannot expect to grasp the present offers in education by traditional means. *Transparency, clarity and comparability* of offers are presently the crucial criteria of professional and need-orientated guidance and information. This is only feasible with the help of a data bank containing trans-regional, cross-institutional (and independent of institutions) all the continuing education data in such a way that the retrieving system offers real help in making decisions, for educational guidance officers as well as for those interested in education. Today guidance officers can access a data bank for their work where encounters, seminars and courses are part of a collocated headline reference system organised along a restricted and unified coding system. One can retrieve the desired course under subjects and headwords, but also by the criteria when and where the course will take place, how much it costs, which qualifications are necessary, whether and how the continuing education measure is subsidised. The ascertained areas of education and the information systems regularly upgraded in the data bank are: languages, IT, elementary education tailor-made for adults, second chance education, specialised training offers for specific professional needs (re-qualification courses, part time training courses matching professional needs), continuing education measures for specific professional needs, lectures, conferences about general and liberal education and civic education.

So the Internet offers on one hand the possibility to cross the borders of institutions and regions and on the other hand the chance to foster the development of regional and institutional identities. Thus another essential step has been taken towards democratisation of education. As of January 2000 the educational offers for Vienna and Lower Austria will be included in this data bank.

Outlooks and wishes

Since regional politics has gradually reconsidered the strengthening and support of endogenous developing factors education has gained new importance and the terms innovation and qualification have become quite popular. But regional development understood as a process of political, social, economical and cultural shaping of one's own environmental conditions, requires the combination of all forces effective in the region.

Many educational projects that claim to have initiated or accompanied regional development fail because of their own standards. Quite often only the pioneer spirit of certain individuals maintains the project. But what long term developments need, apart from competent staff, is the prospect of continuity.

This problem cannot be solved by an individual institution. In the future it will be necessary that institutions of vocational and general continuing education but also from other fields collaborate more closely, both in a project-based form and on a regional basis playing their role as monitors and promoters of regional developing processes. But the big aim is to develop a *Network of Educational Guidance Centres* in the region providing an exchange of experiences, support for the educational guidance officers and a better overall view for those who are interested, as far as the information and guidance offers are concerned. An accompanying scientific study already mentioned above will ascertain the status quo of educational guidance and sound out

the direction of further activities. The following work steps are planned:

- Ascertaining of the present guidance activities and institutions in the Burgenland, the main emphasis being on work with adults
- Expectations and needs of guidance-seekers - inquiry and survey
- Development and more professionalism of the service centre "Educational guidance, cross-institutional" at the regional branch of the federal government for promoting Adult Education in the Burgenland
- Proposals for establishing a network system with model quality for educational guidance in the Burgenland.

Scientific accompanying requires process orientated research. In the sense of "action research" the role of the researcher means that scientific accompanying should be a support for the participants. The effort to include all participants and stimulate them to really act out things means that the researchers are not just acting as neutral observers but are actively engaged in the research process. This explains the necessity to include the wishes and ideas of the "researched" institutions into the development of instruments of survey.

Another network, a *trans-regional information network on the national scale for educational guidance officers*, is in the process of being established. Since

- the professional image of the educational guidance officers gains more and more importance and is associated with high expectations
- many educational guidance officers are quite isolated in their work and offering a continuous supply of information asks for a tremendous effort on the side of the guidance officers
- some of the guidance officers have obtained specific knowledge, interesting research projects are carried out and regional work groups emerge

the plan is to offer an Internet platform for Adult Education to educational guidance officers to ensure a continuous distribution of information about new developments and services and ensuring an exchange of experiences as well as a process of discussion around educational guidance.

Steps towards more professionalism on the part of the continuing education officers, be it by establishing the Continuing Education Academy already mentioned above, and towards increased public relations in the whole field of Adult Education, will be additional supporting measures to turn education into a relevant factor in the region.

List of used abbreviations:

CALL-programmes	traditional grammar exercises and vocabulary training programmes, first introduced on DOS
BM	(Bundesministerium) Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs
BUKEB	Conference of Adult Education in the Burgenland
EBIS	former AE Information Service

AUSTRIA

A folk high school media point and accompanying tutorial and support services as an open learning offer

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Based on material brought in by Paul Kaspar (ed.)

MEDIATHEK

the Self-Access Centre for Languages at the folk high school in Linz

Background:

The idea for such a self-access learning centre for languages came to life in the autumn of 1991, when the first few books, audiocassettes, learning videos and CALL programmes for English were looked at and when a few were purchased, after the head of the Mediathek from the Eurocentre in Cologne, Germany, had come to Linz at the invitation of Mrs. Gertrude Wihrrheim, then head of languages at the folk high school in Linz, to talk about their self-access language learning centre in Cologne. Mrs. Wihrrheim had previously visited quite a few self-access centres, esp. in Switzerland.

The idea to implement a self-access language learning centre at the folk high school in Linz was to transform the already existing language laboratory into a modern language centre, integrating the existing hardware with video- and computer technology, to enhance the quality of language teaching and to provide a service to its students appropriate to a modern language school.

Pedagogical Reasoning:

Research and teaching experience in adult education has shown that groups of learners are very heterogeneous in themselves and that this heterogeneity is due to a great variety of factors:

The students who come to attend a folk high school course differ considerably in their expectations, in their goals and objectives, in their linguistic and learning backgrounds, in their ways of learning, etc.

They have different expectations as far as the teaching methods and the methodology itself are concerned. Some students expect a teacher-centred teaching approach, others are more independent learners.

Students have different aims and goals. While some wish to learn more grammar, others wish to communicate more, and others look for social contact, etc.

Students have different learning strategies, cognitive, associative, etc. and one has to differentiate between different types of learners (the visual, auditory, kinaesthetic lear-

ners) and teachers have to make allowances for this in their teaching methods. And finally it also must be taken into account that students vary in their learning abilities.

This heterogeneity can never be abolished in a course and, therefore, certain tasks can be better dealt with in a self-access centre, saving precious teacher time vs. repetitive, monotonous but necessary drill time, making it possible to have variety of teaching and learning processes and thus creating a versatile and varied teaching environment.

Thus enhancing the quality of the courses and seminars of the folk high school as a teaching institution.

Students who already attend a course have the possibility to practice during Mediathek time which is not possible during course time, using the media best suited for them. Would-be students and new students can get ready for a course they wish to join perhaps at a later stage.

Background history:

In the early part of 1992 Dagmar Baker visited the Eurocentre in Cologne. Mrs. Baker was given the full go ahead to develop the self-access centre at the folk high school, English being the first stage. The Mediathek was officially opened by the Mayor of Linz in the autumn of 1993.

During the summer of 1995 English was extended and German as a Foreign Language was developed (1st introductory package), with the Romanesque languages (French, Italian and Spanish together) being planned as the 3rd stage in the summer of 1996.

In the autumn of 1996 funds were drastically cut and only an introductory package for French was introduced.

Funds had to be cut even further and the development of the Mediathek was further slowed down (February 1998 and autumn 1998).

Equipment:

Hardware:

The existing language laboratory (14 audio places) was re-arranged to make it more suitable for a communicative language learning environment and to accommodate video equipment for up to 8 people (2 video recorders with earphones, some of them infra-red, to allow for a more flexible seating and viewing arrangement) and 4 computers with earphones to provide working space capacity for 2 students per computer.

Altogether it is possible to work with a group of between 12 - 15 people, although space will be rather cramped.

Software:

Books, Audiocassettes, Videos, CALL programmes (traditional grammar exercises and vocabulary training programmes, first introduced on DOS) recently supplemented by various CD-ROMs.

All learning material is published and commercially produced material.

One excellent attempt was made by one of the teachers in her free time to produced material, especially targeted for the folk high school learners, however, it soon became clear that this would be too expensive for the school, if done on an extensive basis.

However, all audio- and videocassettes have so far been painstakingly split up into small and individual units, so that students can find their chosen tasks immediately. All audio- and videocassettes have accompanying tapescripts and worksheets, again divided into small units.

In addition there are many authentic videos on a great variety of topics with accompanying short resumes.

Bookplus: a very comprehensive data base, envisaged to be used by teachers and students alike. However, so far the go-ahead has not yet been given (no OPAC, no teacher training).

Difficulties/Problems:

Target groups:

1st stage:

All the language students who attend language courses at the folk high school Linz. The teachers were asked to include a Mediathek lesson in their teaching plan. First this was voluntary as an introductory offer and later it became compulsory for the English teachers. They had to visit the Mediathek with their class(es) once a term and they were also compensated for their preparation time (which is quite comprehensive), which again was included in the course fees.

The students were then given the opportunity to visit the Mediathek independently in the afternoons and/or evenings and practice (especially on the computer) what they had done during the lesson.

For French and German it remained a voluntary visit.

The Mediathek was considered an additional service for the students, free of charge, and was considered a great asset and success by teachers and students alike.

2nd stage and somewhat parallel:

Second target group: Independent Learners:

People who can not attend a regular course, but who want to learn a language independently and with flexible time schedule.

3 sub-groups originally envisaged: individual learners, small groups of learners, learning partnerships.

So far we have only attracted individual learners. The idea of small groups at a reduced price was discarded due to lack of space for a common room to exchange learning experience and discuss learning difficulties/problems and for the students to meet with their tutors.

Advertising remained fairly within the folk high school (leaflets within the folk high school and information in the folk high school course book).

Folk high school teachers were asked to become tutors and a very basic and voluntary training took place with the help of one experienced teacher. The group was very enthusiastic and came up with very good suggestions and ideas, but tutorial training was not really considered necessary by the folk high school, nor were funds made available.

Efforts were made to obtain funds from other sources and in October 1995 Dr. Christian Kloyber from Strobl came to Linz for a brief workshop. Again the teachers' interest was very great and Mrs. Baker together with other folk high school teachers prepared a preliminary working paper "Project Folk High School Linz - Strobl 1995", with the prospect of funds being made available. However, there was no follow-up.

Since the autumn of 1998 tutorial time for the independent users has been reduced in the Mediathek package in order to make it financially more attractive (from 3 times 90 minutes to 2 times 90 minutes plus Mediathek time).

However, experience has shown that even the most experienced or academic independent learner needs considerable tutorial counselling to keep up his/her learning enthusiasm and learning target and not to get lost in the abundance of learning material and learning options.

In 1997 a fee was introduced for the folk high school students for using the Mediathek in the afternoon and evening hours. ATS 50,00 per afternoon/evening (3 hours) or ATS 400 for a semester ticket, 4 times/a week.

In October 1998 the opening hours were reduced to 2 hours per afternoon and evening, 3 times per week, the price staying the same.

Moreover a visit to the Mediathek is no longer included in the course curriculum. However, the students can visit the Mediathek with their teacher (this is counted as an extra, additional lesson) at the price of ATS 90,00 per person (covering the teacher's fee and the Mediathek overhead costs). This has been met with almost total consumer resistance by the students, which again is reflected in the additional opening hours in the afternoons and evenings.

3rd stage:

Businesses and people attending business oriented courses now being offered at the folk high school, as well as students taking an exam in the spring (ICC, Cambridge certificates).

It is too early yet to see any results.

Future:

Financial support in doubt. It was envisaged to co-operate with other self-access learning centres, tutorials via IT.

Users/Target groups:

1st stage: All language students at the folk high school

2nd stage: Independent learners, who can't attend a course at the folk high school

3rd stage: Companies

Staff:

1 free-lance teacher, 2 students (now 1 student)

Tasks:

Development of the Mediathek:

The concept itself, its various stages, the future development, from a pedagogical, technical and logistic point of view.

The content: The purchasing and the weighting of learning material, adapting the material for the Mediathek and administering it.

Teacher training workshops: general introduction to the Mediathek, the material and how to

use it, the hardware and software, how to work with groups in the Mediathek, CALL workshops, CD-ROM workshops, video workshops, techniques and pedagogics)

Training of tutors:

Counselling of teachers/tutors and independent learners, as well as students.

First spokesperson for Independent Learners

Looking for suitable tutors.

Administration:

General administration, data base administration, budget administration. stock taking, etc.

December 1998

Mediathek / May 2000

How the Mediathek will continue:

Recently a team of experts has been authorised to produce a concept for a self learning centre in the new building of the folk high school.

The new Self Learning Centre (SLC) will be a point of intersection and co operation between the City Library and the Folk High School in Linz.

The SLC will include:

- Provision of new technology, CD-ROMs, work places connected to the Internet
 - Access to information services in the Internet
 - Books, audio- and video-material
 - Low costs for visitors, easy access
 - Tutorial guidance and accompaniment
 - Extension of subject specific fields - from the (present) realm of language to IT, vocational education, etc.
-
- Emphasis on subject specific guidance (on various days)
 - Lectures, discussions
 - Meeting of self aid groups

Financed by:

Visitor fees
City budget

The Mediathek's subsidies are quite scarce at the moment

July 1999

Self-study material design in language learning

Gitta Stagl

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The beginning of our work is marked by a then mandate from the adult education department of the Austrian Ministry for Education. This department wanted to start a broad project-networking with institutions in the realm of adult education and the educational and scientific branch of the Austrian Broadcasting Radio - for the enhancement of educational work with the usage of literary sources. It was our task to investigate and to produce a comprehensive reader on the rich history of interaction between the written word and the way the word is understood and interpreted by reading groups and individual readers. We published this reader "Literatur / Lektüre / Literarität" - spanning the world of scientific research to various ways of expressing in art and everyday reality and subsequently produced follow-up books and brochures on how signs, pictures, sounds and words relate in terms of modern ways of viewing, picking up and comprehending - "Akustisches, Visuelles, Literarisches", "Texte, Bilder, Töne", H. Altenhuber Universitäre Volksbildung in Österreich 1895 - 1937.

Our approach took us across history, across countries, across disciplines and across languages. We offered accompanying workshops for course- and project leaders in adult education - from second chance education to scientific lecturing, to experiment and to develop hands-on-techniques for integrating different ways of seeing and of telling. During these workshops those holding and those participating became more and more aware of the transferral dimension in language(s) and in making sense. It was out of these experiences and their following review work of writing that we could see how various ways of speaking (and writing) created differing kinds of expression and how the interaction between the various kinds of formulating produced new perspectives. The impact of language and of knowing how language works became more and more evident, in particular the making of an understanding of language as a universal way to make sense of what is going on around us. The ways of making sense were as manifold as the participants of the workshop groups and the intensive chance to communicate with texts, films, broadcast and to communicate about ways of understanding made it evident to all present that dialogue is what gives life to texts as well as to the way we learn and approach things.

We discovered that independent ways of learning and studying are a quality enhanced by texts that invite the readers to make stories of their own out of the stories told. We discovered that even texts dating back centuries can be read as a rich source for ways of teaching, ways of telling and ways of imagining. We came to think about each of these processes as being interconnected and began to term them as different kinds of languages - with specific ways of expressing thoughts and things and facts and different ways of accessing and processing them. Out of all this grew a concept of

thinking in terms of translation: translation from thought to term - from term to things - and from things to other ways of learning and phrasing.

When working with texts and interpolations of texts by modern authors we got access how readers and writers relate in their authorial voices. We also found out how important it is to view any given text as a dialogical offer for connecting with another background, another context, another reality and another reality of reasoning.

We had been introduced through our project and the publications and workshops to the Anglo-Saxon tradition of making and disseminating literature high, low and middle to the general public - finding and generating a broader reading audience than in other countries. We had been introduced to the campaigns for fighting functional illiteracy and been surprised by the way these campaigns led to new insights into ways of publishing, making TV series and addressing new viewers, readers, listeners. We had access to a rich variety of research work in the course of these campaigns with its many colours and forms on all levels. We found out that self-study, self-help and reading were non-antagonistic terms to support and group learning but reciprocally enhancing.

It was approximately at this time of discoveries that we were asked to produce material in the line of self-study modules. The educational landscape had been affected - also as always with a delayed shift in time - by the growing demand for more permeability between the sectors and the growing demand to create better opportunities for adults to proceed with their learning in any direction they want to - or have to because of the changing labour and market landscape.

The idea behind the material we were asked to design was to enable learners in different settings to learn independently - with a well thought through design of support and tutoring built in as part of the material. This kind of independent learning was meant to be coached by an appropriate set of learning support - from initial guidance to counselling and tutoring - for methodical as well as subject knowledge.

We had followed the development of the Open University from the early days of physics at 6 o'clock a.m. presented by the BBC Television to the regional tutorial services and work with high tech equipment. We were in particular interested to understand how learners without formal certified "subject" knowledge could be given the chance to study on their own and to make up for what they might lack in "learning" experience. It was thus that we came across the National Extension College Cambridge. When studying the history of OU it had turned out that there might be a field of study interest and the capacity to make sense of the work schedule required. We came to know when we investigated more thoroughly and then came for an instructive visit to the NEC that it had turned out that some of the people had turned away from the Open University offer because they felt insecure and not prepared to meet the demands, because they were unaccustomed to systematic learning and felt they couldn't keep up because they didn't really know what they were expected to do, to know, to handle. This was the foundation moment for the NEC. First regarded as a kind of bridging and assisting institution for ways into Open University, it quickly became a provider for all kinds of in-between studies - for vocational courses, GCSE, by and by A-levels and finally a flexi-study and tutoring system for post-compulsory / secondary as well as external tertiary learning.

We were impressed by the comprehensiveness and modular quality of the material by the NEC, in particular at the GCSE level and the A-level. We were convinced of the simplicity of the layout and the clarity of structure. It suited our goals since it

managed to follow a dialogical form of leading through the text work, activities and assignments.

We had developed for ourselves and out of our work a specific approach towards working and acquiring language - the so called "idiomatic approach". We had found through our work with resources from different areas and fields, from different times and in different cultures and languages that transfer problems in language are part of the ambiguity and the non-formalised side of language - the side which allows anybody to use language in his / her own way without becoming agrammatical. So we had followed transfer matters in working with one's own "mother" language and so come across the richness of sub-languages and ways of expressing as part of advanced language usage: An Austrian example in literature for the theatre would be for instance Franz Grillparzer or Johann Nepomuk Nestroy - a language picked from a pathetic and stiff background, partly to make use of this kind of expressing for the most principled things in life and a language composed of the most delicate allusions from French, Italian, Viennese and Rotwelsh (the rogue language of the late 19th century) - so very rooted in the cultural and historical context of their time (mid 19th century) that they are difficult to translate in any other language - let alone be performed. Our studies in language as well as in applied languages of users - let us say German or Austrian - led to the development and to the deployment of a kind of language learning based on chunks and clusters of language, rather than words and vocabulary plus normative grammar knowledge. We do rely for our work on purposeful meaning and experiential ways of language performance allowing learners to work with chunks and clusters of meaning rather than making them adopt bound phrases for appearingly invariable communicative situations - like the "how do you do" one in English. We would rather present a text where the German phrase: "Wie geht es Ihnen?" is shown as rather depleted of meaning and very rarely affording a proper or true answer, except for a very short "Danke, gut" to convey to the learner that cultural aspects don't transmit themselves with words or one to one terms of meaning but rather via thought structures and historically grown ways of expressing with a more or less broad range of freedom.

We have developed this approach and combined it with what we term the application of the dialogical principle. We do look upon learning as a two-way-communication where the starting point of the learner is regarded as the ignition of a process of coming to terms with what is being presented as language-input, text, visual image and text, where both sides are active. The learner can only participate in what is being taught, gained, told when he / she can relate, pose questions, ask for answers and find an experiential or informed background from where to start and how to integrate.

This principle is of great importance for the adult learner - since he / she is a grown up being with a lot of experiences and a history of his / her own - with a lot of possibilities to relate, and to harvest on - working with language on language.

In the tradition of Dewey and Bruner and Vygotsky we look upon language learning as a form of learning with experiences. We try to use language as a means to highlight the experiential background of the learner and at the same time to make him / her practice language skills and to acquire instruments and tools for understanding and using language in practice - and by learning to reflect on the peculiarities and rules of language use and usage.

We found the material of the NEC most suitable for our way of working with language and most suitable for introducing self-study material in the field. We were also

looking for material with A-level standard but also applicable for second chance education for people coming from vocational and years of work experience. In the eighties a university access examination training without preliminary A-levels had been introduced and become popular for getting on track with university studies. In 1997 another form of A-level - the so called vocational A-level examination - had been launched and has been very popular ever since. We wanted to present a kind of comprehensive A-level material fit to be used for external Matura-examination (a defined set of A-levels with 12 pre-examinations) and the two other Matura-similar forms.

We were lucky in getting the licence to adapt the original A-level material for learners of English as a First or Second language to learning the language as a foreign language. We knew from research and experience in adult education that one of the main problems of any form of advanced learning is the inhomogeneity of learners' levels. Learners have different levels of performance and competence and they are used to different kinds of performances.

We have tried to meet these differences in demands, needs and wants by offering a range of texts from different fields for various practical situations and by encouraging the learner to find a way of his / her own to approach, to come to terms and to solve and sort out an activity - thus building a line of activities leading to larger and more demanding tasks and assignments. The method applied works strongly with embedding the language into a non-language context and then once again allowing the language context to topple over into a very everyday and ordinary context. The governing principle of the material is the awareness-raising practice of applying language, reflecting on doing and concluding (with in-built) feedback. Learners get away from purely mechanical and repetitive work and learn to explore their language as well as their capacities through language. The material offers an introductory module for getting familiar with the methods used and required when working independently or with a peer group or with a tutor - present or virtual - either part-time or full-time with the self-study element as part of the preparatory course offer.

The material we talk about has been used and tested in various settings and with different groups of learners. It has been used as a kind of supplementary material for A-level in the classroom context - with extensive phases for self-study and individualisation. It has been used as the main source for self-study and regular tutoring and condensed direct teaching phases and it has been used as the main source for individual studies with a system of regular tutoring via e-mail, snail-mail, phone. Within a period of two years the material for A-level in English and another one developed by Lernfeld Sprache leaning on the concept and the structure of the NEC material for German A-levels in German has been used in a number of adult education institutions. This deployment of material has been accompanied by regular workshops and a number of tutorials with groups and individuals of teachers, trainers and tutors to prepare them to meet the new demands for this kind of "teaching".

The project period of applying, collecting continuous feedback from the three relevant agents involved: institutional co-ordinators, teaching and tutoring staff and learners has been a prolonged assessment phase for testing the applicability and appropriateness of material, of getting an even more detailed knowledge of what might be useful in terms of resource material supply as well as learning support. This phase has brought a number of relevant informations which will lead to modification of the material already produced and to a modification of resource supply and teaching and tutoring know-how. Teacher training takes either place at a teacher's training college

or university and focuses on subject knowledge more than on education. There is little on offer in a systematic way for adapting teaching ideas derived from subject knowledge and institutional work with children to youngsters to the grown up and "matured" personality. Part of feeling confident with self-study time, self-study techniques, methods of the independent learning in the willingness from learner and teacher side to explore and to reflect what is going on between the learning person, the learning content and the learning instruments. This attitude is new to most people - be they learners or teachers, used to following form-like curricular demands and training, used to course-books as a sort of railing for the curricular demand, backed by time-to-time testing. Self-study forms and their support ask for navigating and guiding and assessing techniques as part of chaperoning the pupils and mediating between learning goals, learning styles, learning techniques. The know-how for this kind of work has to be accepted by the tutors involved and has to be worked out for them in a way suitable to their own ideas of teaching - so that in subsequence the learner can find out how it is best for him / her to learn. All this is an essential part of implementing. It allows much space for the teacher for focussing on aspects important for him / her - be they thematic or literature related - and to integrate the language aspect into the deeper layers of acquiring subject knowledge. The problem with language teaching as such and with adults coming back to formal learning in particular is one of self-confidence and self-knowledge and taking into consideration and meeting the different starting and competence levels in order to convey quite challenging levels of competence.

Self-study forms are a novelty in the Austrian education landscape as is the open approach to resource based learning and the necessary search works involved. Individualised learning offers put a lot of demands on the teaching staff and need some time to show their positive effects for making teaching and learning more directed and unconstrained at the same time.

The problem we have dug into is also a problem of standards for teaching and learning, in particular for adults. Ahead of us lies the task to focus more on the diversity of training needs of the teaching personnel involved and to work out an idea of accredited offers where self-study elements form part of learning - whether done in courses or in the distance with tutoring and seminars.

What has been broadly acknowledged in the context of this applying period has been the necessity to focus more on adult appropriate learning techniques and to use the broad realm of language related material and media to enhance this kind of learning. There is also a heightened willingness on the side of teaching staff to use technology as a means of communication, of correcting and feeding back, of assessing and counselling. All the elements mentioned need to be carefully seen to, they need time to show in practice, they need a lot of extra know-how for institutions and their "preparatory and public work" as well as for the learner to become more confident in dealing with his and other resources.

What we do in this as well as in other projects - ranging from producing and designing material to offering multilingual workshops for students with other mother tongues than German who are studying German to researching individualised ways of learning - is to continue the treasure of integrative pedagogical approaches stressing individual and group growth as well as "open" acquisition techniques, be they Comenius, Freinet, Montessori, Schwarzwald. What we build on is the exiled and expelled tradition of regarding education as meeting point between science - learning - research.

This kind of popular education concept has brought together famous and outstanding men and women of science with the "ordinary" interested person and has relied on question, answer and discourse as demonstrating and learning techniques. Out of this movement developed a wide range of research on the connection between consciousness - learning - thought. It was then widely accepted that learning was a matter of all the senses and thus stimulating for the brain.

Our work with the language study material and our work with other material are always integrated with the idea of allowing us as much access as possible to different subject areas by developing and offering access forms where writing, reading, listening and making sense are key competences. We have produced material - modular and exemplary - for small research projects. The new forms of A-level ask the examinant to demonstrate his / her experience-led knowledge and to combine the latter with independent search for literature - the "Fachbereich". We have done exemplary modules for these subject fields which find their repercussions with learners: Informatics, Social Pedagogy, Social Medicine. These modules are available on CD and in paper and can be used by tutors and learners as a guiding model or / and as additional material.

We offer workshops for professionals in fields affiliated to education, either in cultural or health contexts or with SMEs. We have done a working seminar series for working with scientific texts with language students from Bratislava. We hold workshops for SMEs employees for creative and for everyday writing.

We have been working with High Tech in a number of contexts, all our materials are developed, designed and produced as templates by ourselves. We offer electronic tutorials and train teachers to make use of PC work in their "normal" teaching process. We will do a continuation of a project where the establishment of internet-access-PC-laboratories is a number one priority. We are doing applied research and the sociological monitoring for all the projects. Most of them are co-ordinated and have been initiated by us. We work mainly in transnational co-operation because we put ourselves to experience distance modes of co-operation and do think we win because this kind of work enables us to become broad-minded and informed and gets us connected with what is going on on the international level of development. Right now we are involved in five European long-term projects in the field of research and technology, in the field of education and adult learning, in the field of open and flexible learning, and in the field of learning with multimedia and technology.

Editor's remarks

The Ufficio Educazione permanente is a department within the Italian Culture Department of the governmental body for the autonomous province of Alto Adige. This unit feels obliged to the concept of Educazione permanente which combines the idea of continuous further education with the concept of lifelong learning. The Ufficio is a promoting body for a diversity of initiatives and organisations run by a diversity of interest groups and expert specialists in the field of culture and education. This institution understands its task as fostering and caring for the needs of both learners and learning institutions. The range of offers falling into the context of this continuous work is bringing together literature and Mr. and Mrs. Everybody to running a "Caffè Cultura" once a year on the occasion of the Learning Fair.

The Ufficio is confronted not only with the challenge of promoting lifelong learning in multi-cultural and very inhomogeneous social setting, it is also confronted with the richness of tradition and culture of the three main language groups. The situation of the autonomous province is also characterised by an upside-down effect. The German speaking minority population is a majority within the province. The oldest language group, the Ladins, are a tiny minority group. So three minorities have to co-exist and to leave space for each other. The acceptance of the three languages spoken is a crucial element of the promoting concept. Only recently the Ufficio has seen to the set up of an audio-visual centre, including PC-laboratory, offering free access to media and information as well as tutoring staff. It seems only natural that the Ufficio positions its main activity in the field of promoting through funding and dissemination and for setting up free access institutions for the many. The lifelong learning concept is translated by the Ufficio's activity into "making people aware of how important it is to learn". The Ufficio is very keen on expanding low threshold offers for information, advice and guidance.

It is within this concept of information and advice that the Ufficio has initiated a survey among the professionals in the field of further education. The Ufficio wanted to collocate the resonance of need in the sector of new technology work for the "ordinary" courses run. It adopted the idea of openness through this survey and regards the data collected as a starting point for the smooth transition to new forms of teaching and learning. The innovative aspect of openness and lifelong learning is furthered by the Ufficio through its preparedness to support projects which clearly develop new styles and participation forms in learning. A range of outstanding ones are the three - CLS, CEDOCS and TANGRAM, which will be presented here in more detail.

Analysis of the actual situation - evaluation of projects; analysis and evaluation of guidance in a multi-cultural background

Lucia Piva

Regional policy on IT literacy for adults

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The Autonomous Province of Bolzano has yet to prepare a set of guidelines aimed at increasing computer literacy.

As is often the case, education agencies have been more sensitive and reactive than public bodies. They have taken action autonomously by launching their own initiatives. Witness the Tangram, CLS and CEDOCS pilot projects. These projects have responded to the concrete needs expressed by a part of the adult population of South Tyrol.

Moreover, the Tangram project has made open and flexible learning one of its objectives. Freelearning provides basic computer training and Internet surfing skills to those who cannot attend lessons in a classroom. As well as providing information on local history and culture in an enjoyable manner, the online thriller 'Oswald von Wolkenstein' brings those taking part in the game closer to the world of computers and helps them to learn more.

The CLS, consortium of working students, has acquired a considerable amount of experience in the recovery of school dropouts. Working in this sector requires a special kind of sensitivity towards the needs of student workers. The decision to prepare special learning material for those who cannot attend traditional lessons was a compulsory step for an association wishing to provide its members with more opportunities to obtain secondary school qualifications.

The CEDOCS Culture and Education Centre has set out to help all those student workers wishing to obtain a degree in engineering, thanks to an agreement with the NETTUNO consortium, a national institution. It provides material and tutoring for those who were unable to attend university lectures, also because there are no engineering faculties in South Tyrol. Activities carried out in the linguistic field have made possible the creation of a CD-ROM which aims to provide assistance in preparing the Bilingual Certificate examination, an exam which people in South Tyrol must take in order to prove their knowledge of the two main languages spoken in the region: Italian and German. This tool facilitates learning through various exercises with which the correct answers are supplied.

Any attempt to evaluate the results would be premature at this stage, since some of these initiatives require more time for concrete and tangible results to be reached. The Tangram project, for example, has witnessed an increase in enrolments as a result of

the introduction of free learning. The mediaeval minstrel game has involved people from other Italian regions, who have participated with great enthusiasm.

Moreover, the involvement of the Public Administration was indirect at first. It has provided financial and moral support to the proposals put forward by local operators. When the need was felt to carry out a more detailed analysis of the use of new learning technologies, the Province's Permanent Education Office organised a conference entitled 'Learnet: network knowledge'. This event was addressed to institutions working in the field of training and education in South Tyrol. It was held in Merano on 11 - 14 November 1998. Its main objectives can be summarised as follows:

1. Analysing the advantages and disadvantages of tele-learning and the new learning models using various media;
2. Identifying basic learning skills for optimum media usage
3. Providing an opportunity to compare and contrast different experiences in South Tyrol, Italy and other German-speaking areas.

Following this seminar, in order to complete the initiative, a CD-ROM was published in February. The CD comprises the papers presented at the conference by various experts, the most important projects discussed and the most useful Internet Web sites concerning this subject. Its purpose is to provide a useful tool to those wishing to learn more and put into practice what they have learned, after they have approached a subject for the very first time.

It is our heartfelt wish that other organisations in South Tyrol follow in the footsteps of Tangram, CLS and CEDOCS.

Another important step made by local public bodies, thanks also to their involvement in the Re-real project, was the preparation of a questionnaire to be used to outline the situation of the thirty or so training and education agencies in South Tyrol. The questionnaire comprises questions on computer equipment, Internet and tele-learning knowledge, as well as questions on any plans to offer courses making use of new computer technology.

On the basis of the results which will be drawn up very soon by ASTAT, the Provincial Institute of Statistics, it will be possible to understand what sort of action will have to be taken for South Tyrol to become more effective in this field.

In this context a paramount role is played by the Province's Audio-visual Centre. It was created to supply audio-visual equipment and teaching material to schools and local cultural, educational and youth associations. In recent years it has opened up to the general public. This centre is famous for its multimedia room with free Internet access. To make use of these facilities, people must register and reserve a sixty-minute slot. Users are allowed a maximum of three sixty-minute slots per week. All those requiring assistance can make use of the net-coaching services which are always available during opening hours. Since it was launched approximately one year ago, the initiative has enjoyed great success and shows people's interest in the Internet. Furthermore, allowing people to use this equipment free of charge is making a considerable contribution to computer literacy in South Tyrol.

It should also be stressed that various public libraries are beginning to offer similar, though less structured services.

Final guideline preparation work marks the end of a maturing process which has yet to be completed in South Tyrol. Further commitments are required from the Province's Permanent Education Office and the local Training and Education Agencies. Close co-operation will be required in order to compare and contrast our experience and learn from it.

Main objectives behind IT-usage in adult education

The main objective behind the use of Information Technology is to provide more open and flexible ways to learn. One of the reasons why many adults have failed to react to certain initiatives in the past lies in the rigid structure of those initiatives. Time and distance - related problems are quite common. Adult learners do not like returning to school desks, especially when their schooldays are not fondly remembered.

The opportunity to learn autonomously according to one's own needs and capabilities is certainly one of the strongest points of tele-learning. But for this experience to be fruitful, it must be accompanied by effective tutoring so that learners receive all the support they require.

Three unique initiatives for adult learners

CLS

The Consorzio Lavoratori Studenti has been founded in the mid-seventies with the explicit aim to support students who are forced to work while they study and on the other hand to support people in work who wish to continue or complete their studies in their efforts to learn. Thus the CLS has always seen its task in adjusting quality-and certificate-standards in learning to the needs of those who have to earn their living. So very early in their history they have tried to take into account constraints of time, of place, of pace and of motivation.

Besides its range of certificate- and diploma-courses it offers non-formal training in fields of interest and has a strong department for vocational education and computer studies. The CLS might be compared to a kind of college which offers a range of modular course systems and combines the physical lessons with tutoring, guiding of "virtual" lessons with so-called external students. The arrival of the possibility to implant IT fitted perfectly well into the overall concept of CLS. In 1997 the tailor-didactic project was launched by forming a partnership between the expert specialists in CLS and expert specialists from technology and teaching together with University of Trento. This project has brought in more than the many didactical and technological effects described in detail in the following text. It has also created a practical bridge between three different sectors in education: secondary education, adult education, university education. (ed.)

Alessandra Franci and Maurizio Prescianotto

C.L.S. - Association for Working Students (Consorzio Lavoratori Studenti) - is an agency for continuing education which has been operation for 25 years in the Province of Bolzano organising formative activities for adults in eight areas of intervention: 1. Remedial education for advanced-level school. 2. Back-up seminars for University. 3. Post-diploma-training projects financed by the European Social Fund. 4. Computer Science. 5. Art History and Handicrafts. 6. School of Social Relations - communications, history and economy of the Alto Adige, its formation and its formers. 7. Remedial social training in weak areas. 8. Languages - courses and study-abroad programmes.

C.L.S. promotes conditions for training and remedial education within a context of cohabitation and participation between the three language groups and the new actuality of immigrants in the Province. C.L.S. is a non-profit association and safeguards the right to continuing education, offering its services at reasonable prices, financing the activity with economic contributions from the Council of Culture and Continuing Education of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano (based on a law from 1983).

The sector "Remedial Education for Advanced-level Schools" intends to raise the level of schooling among the population, being one of the lowest percentages in the EU - 53.9% of the residential population graduated in the 1997/98 school year -, and promotes the possibilities of a social/cultural self-fulfilment of the individual.

In the past 25 years, 904 worker-students have obtained a diploma attending C.L.S. courses. Our courses allow students to obtain technical diplomas (commercial, industrial, surveyor), professional diplomas (business, social services), training college diplomas for pre-school teachers and artistic specialisation. Remedial courses, organised for one-, two- and three-year periods for a preparation on all subjects with 850 hours of lessons, held during evening hours from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., Mondays to Fridays during the September-June period. The courses allow students to take exams as "external candidates" of the Province in public advanced-level schools, in the Italian language.

The causes which limit enrolment and course attendance:

- A. The territory of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano is mountainous and extensive. 73% of the population reside in areas with less than 30,000 inhabitants. Only 6 municipal districts, out of 116, have a population that exceeds 10,000 inhabitants. Comparing our autonomous Province of Bolzano to the Lombard Region (a region in the north of Italy, its capital being Milan) we have the following data:
 - territorial extension in hectares=1/3 (740,043 / 2,385,869)
 - population in inhabitants=1/20 (440,508 / 8,882,408).
- B. Places where courses are held, usually situated in urban centres in the valleys, accessible to non-residents only by covering long distances.
- C. Public transportation connections (bus and train) don't facilitate evening attendance.
- D. The Italian language population (116,914 units), outside Bolzano and Meran shows an insufficient numeric consistency to organise courses with the requisite minimum requisite of participants.
- E. Work and family commitments limit the possibility of regular course attendance.

To allow access to the training of new subjects and to avoid the above mentioned restrictions, C.L.S. has activated a new experimentation of new teaching methods, taking the opportunity to offer the latest developments in communicative technology, computer science and data processing. The teledidactic project is placed in this experimental context.

The *teledidactic project* was launched by C.L.S. back in 1997, involving the remedial education and computer science sector, through the formation of a work group made up of teachers, technicians and involving external structures such as the Multimedia Audio-visual Centre of the University of Trento. Fully operating. There will be an extension of the experiment to other sectors of intervention in adult education. The term "teledidactic" defines the service of training through video and data processing aids. The interactive relationship between teacher and student is integrated by instruments and transmission networks which allow to carry out training, going beyond "here and now", spatial time limits, place and presence of the subjects involved.

Therefore, the potential of video training is:

- the overcoming of spatial distances
- the possibility of subdividing the programme into temporal modules
- the innovation of teaching methods sustained by images, texts and films.

The critical factors of the project are:

- a. Scarce knowledge of the use of computer instruments on the part of working students
- b. The continual innovation of computer hardware and software programmes require constant updating and economic resources.
- c. The prospects of experimental training, in relation to the predisposition of its subject matter, to the definition of its proceedings and the training of teachers and tutors.
- d. The development of the capacity to verify and continually redefine the phases of the project.

Work programme for the October 1999 - May 2000 school year

C.L.S. has launched a teledidactic project involving teachers and students of the physics course in the two-year period of the advanced-level school, foreseeing an intervention of 80 educational units with the following conditions

- Frontal preliminary lessons held by the teacher to lay out the course
- Lessons in the computer science classroom held by the teacher with the support of digital subject matter.
- The students' self-training lessons on the subject matter with the assistance of a tutor and exchange of communication via e-mail.
- The organised vision of 34 video-lessons in a VCR format.
- Practical applications and examinations in digital format.

Formative action initially takes place in the computer science labs of C.L.S. and is run by a software platform which allows teachers and members to exchange messages

through Intranet-C.L.S.. Eventually there will be the possibility for teachers, tutors and students to sign-on to the C.L.S. website even from a remote P.C. positioning. The C.L.S. computer science lab is available to course members even during extra-curricular hours.

The contents of the course are summed up in lecture notes in a card file at disposition at C.L.S., titled "Introduction to Classic Mechanics" and also re-proposed in a HTML digital format on Intranet.

The contents are made up of the following parts:

<i>Introduction</i>	The Grandeur of Physics Vectorial grandeur
<i>Cinematic I</i>	Rectilinear movement Movement on any trajectory
<i>Dynamics</i>	Powers Work and energy Isolated systems

The course in HTML digital format has the following structure.

1. Opening page, from which there's access to the above mentioned index and the introduction page to the course with the possibility of connecting directly on-line to the web site.
2. Every chapter is divided into paragraphs, each of which corresponds to an HTML digital page, that concisely presents the contents of the paragraph.
3. At the end of the presentation of the subject matter a learning verification on the part of the teacher is provided by proposing the solutions to several exercises to the course members. The solutions, also available in the lecture notes, are present on video, organised on 7 pages, one for each argument dealt with in the form of a questionnaire with answers:
 - open with descriptive answers
 - open with numeric answers
 - closed: "true / false" or "choose the correct answer".

The answers are gathered by the programme and elaborated so as to be sent by e-mail to the teacher, who will then evaluate and verify the learning level achieved by the student.

Work programme for the school year 2000 / 2001

If the project proves to be efficient, the subject matter will be completed by integrating parts of the Physics programme with the programmes provided by the advanced-level school: thermo-dynamics, fluid-dynamics, the study of perfect gases, electro-magnetism and waves. The card files and their application in HTML digital format will also be concluded. At request the product must be made available for long distance educational needs, implementing the digitalised insertion of 34 video lessons in VCR format of the physics course taped at the Multimedia Audiovisual Services Centre of the University of Trento.

It will also be necessary to attend to the aspects concerning the exercises, introducing and applying a component which controls the responses, to the closed answers with numeric responses, allowing the students to receive the results and the evaluation of the examination interactively.

The objectives for the project

1. Provide support for the "frontal" lessons held in the initial phase by the teacher in the computer science lab at C.L.S.
2. Computer science and data processing training for students, verifying the interaction with the teachers and the training efficiency.
3. Stimulating visual memory in students.
4. The issuing of a training product in digital format.
5. The production of and the experimentation with a long distance educational instrument.
6. In the following phases, the direct encounters with the teachers could be limited to clarifying subjects that the students have already confronted on their own.

CEDOCS - Centro di Formazione e Cultura

The CEDOCS is a foundation of the late eighties and has answered the urgent need in education to make good use of the potential of IT, above all for those learners who have been limited in their participation through their work and the area they live in and their social and private obligations. CEDOCS understands itself as a contribution to furthering culture through education, for instance: the range of offers for personal growth and self-development. It stresses the fact that language is an ambassador of culture through the bi-lingual diplomas and the impact on language learning. It looks at education as a cultural factor by bringing together audio-visual media, university professionals and networking experts in an attempt to give the best in quality with the latest in technology. (ed.)

Darma De Pretis-Gallmetzer

CEDOCS - Documentation and social cultural centre

Founded in 1986 as an association it became a cooperative in 1994. It was officially recognised by the Autonomous Province of Bolzano as "permanent educational Agency". It performs its activities in the field of permanent education thanks to the contribution of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano's Italian Language and Culture Department.

Activities:

- Didactic activities for adults: elementary and advanced courses in computer science, Internet, foreign languages (German, English, Arab) both through traditional and multimedia instruments: sets of different didactic CD-ROMs for foreign languages, a CD-Rom "My private German teacher".
- Various educational projects for adults and children for the development of per-

sonal growth, of conscious insight into the social processes and better collaboration among national and different language groups.

- Professional formation activities financed by the EU and other social institutions. The Leonardo da Vinci project: language exchange Austria-Italy in 1995-96; by European Social Fund project: "Veterinary technical assistant" in 1998, E-Commerce in 1999.
- Cultural activities: meetings and conferences about cultural issues; didactic visits.
- Social activities: in relation to differing age and social level, the cooperative performs entertainment and support activities for disadvantaged categories (elderly people, foreign workers, immigrants, children, also by organising volunteer groups).
- Sociological research on formative needs of extra-community workers living in South Tyrol (financed by the province's social-services department)
- Distance learning: degree in Informatics and Mechanics Engineering (in collaboration with Consorzio Nettuno) - Distance learning modalities of the second generation
- Internet site: distance learning modality of the third generation

The CD-Rom "My private German teacher" (realised through contribution of the Bilingual-Office of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano) was born out of the necessity of the two-languages (Italian-German) requested institutionally for any local public employment. It has been designed and realised by our experts in anthropology and didactic in collaboration with our informatics technicians.

Production time: from 1994 to 1998. In the information meetings of the first year more than 40 students were interested, all of them already having a job. Even in the following years the rate of interest in information activity was notably high.

It is a simple and innovative multimedia instrument to learn German. Open to every age, category and cultural level, it becomes flexible to any need: working, environmental, time and comprehension, the only necessity being the availability of a multimedia PC.

Developed by an Austrian teacher, it contains a good number of grammar explanations divided according to difficulty. They link interactively to a number of reinforcement exercises and to translation tests divided into advanced, progressive and intermediate levels (A, B and C).

The CD-Rom is generally utilised by our seat, by young and adult users interested in new forms of learning languages which allow a more flexible study organisation. This CD-Rom is generally used as integrating support to the German language courses organised by CEDOCS.

It is used in the CEDOCS learning room by learners who prefer a self-learning system instead of the normal course with the teacher present (often this is due to love for news, higher availability of time in particular moments of the day, when courses with a teacher present became impossible to organise or because it is considered a learning support, useful for quick control of notions with sufficiently effective results.

It can be used at home just as a self-learning instrument by those who prefer this method of organisation of time or convenience in transfer. The CD-Rom can be supplied on loan at home, as long as it is not in commerce.

The CD-Rom can be found in the Autonomous Province of Bolzano Public Library specialised in support materials for second language learning.

The use of CD-Rom has been tested through a questionnaire: answers show it as a useful instrument, immediate in comprehension and easy in use, a tutor being not particularly needed, useful as self-learning tool as well as reinforcement to what was already learnt in a course with a teacher.

Use of other supports in learning languages: CEDOCS offers a number of multimedia supports for the learning of foreign languages (German, English and French) such as CD-Rom, produced by very well-known companies (Didacel, Winkler, Langenscheidt, ...) together with audio-cassettes or video material.

These support tools are used both as integration in the foreign language courses organised by CEDOCS, and as a self-learning system by persons who prefer this method instead of courses with teachers.

The teacher of the course takes care of tutoring the students in the use of multimedia systems, and CEDOCS internal trainers help students in their first phase of use. Survey is obtained in a final test or in survey form.

Nettuno

Cooperating with the Consortium: Network for the University Everywhere, non-profit consortium among Universities and firms (Politecnico of Milan and Turin, University of Naples, RAI, IVECO, Confindustria, IRI, Telecom Italy). Promoted by the Department of University and of Scientific and Technological Research in order to realise university courses at a distance, it performs distance learning and teaching, technology being used only to transfer the content of knowledge via: satellite TV, public television, Internet, interactive data-banks, video conferences (ISDN), computer conferences, E-mail, telephone. At the moment the consortium organises university courses: three-years post-diploma in engineering and its different branches.

The professors, in team work with associated universities, develop the curriculum and the learning programmes for the distance learning students. During the video lessons (broadcasted by RAI and available also on video) information about specific topics are given together with new studying and learning methods and a critical reading system to examine tests.

CEDOCS began collaboration in distance learning in 1995, through the Politecnico of Turin in order to offer a service to all people living in the province of Bolzano and interested in it, when public studying structures are missing.

This opportunity supported by the Culture Department of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano enables the students to use video cassettes with different lessons and provides advice together with didactical material, the opportunity for small student-groups to attend lessons held by tutors, the use of our seat as working station.

Internet site

It is being installed (operative probably by October 1999) and will also offer the possibility of attending on-line courses and different activities together with information about permanent educational activities organised according to the third generation distance learning modalities, they will offer useful clues for the experience to share within the Rereal project. This website can be enriched by a number of on-line courses realised in Italian and English in order to be more interesting for a larger part of users on line. In the first part activities will surely be based on an experimental metho-

dology in order to produce new and more articulated proposals, the website being enriched also by a number of contributions in the German language.

TANGRAM

www.tangram.it

The TANGRAM educational agency offers something singular to users/learners. The TANGRAM specialists have developed a pedagogical model of their own. They have created the Freelearning method. Freelearning covers two aspects, one being the apparently unsolvable riddle between order and freedom in learning, the other allowing freedom to enter and enrich learning. Another component is the accessibility of learning in terms of money and freedom of range. The Freelearning method is strongly rooted in the pedagogical thinking of Celestin Freinet, with strong notions of individual time and movement and directedness towards the learner's experience. For the Freelearning method three elements are essential. TANGRAM offers tutored learning. Tutors have to be professionals in technical and learning terms and fluent in Italian and German. The TANGRAM Freelearning space has long opening hours and learners are free to make their own choices. Learners are also given the choice to enhance their level of education. The main instrument of work is the PC as a connector to the storage bank of data and media and the tutor, who is a mentor and a professional. (ed.)

Alessandro Baccin

TANGRAM

Tangram is an educational agency entered on the provincial register of non lucrative organisations (ONLUS) and recognised by the Autonomous Province of Bolzano, which backs the realisation of the programmed enterprise.

The quality of the services is guaranteed by the experience in the different fields of the permanent education, by the constant dedication to research and experimentation and by the methodology and didactics used.

The different fields can be divided in:

- Courses in computer science and permanent education
- Services in computer culture "Bulletin Board System"
- Free learning or free surfing in the Internet
- Spare time enterprises (cultural routes in town, early instruction in German in kinder gardens, and so on)

The particular didactic approach based on the respect of the individual learning times, on a pleasant working environment and on the professional capabilities of the members of the team, has allowed the agency to receive important praises in Italy and take part in international meetings (Rome, Trieste, Merano) and other great events.

Tangram has been one of the first nation-wide educational agencies to organise its own computer culture web-site, opened 1991 on Fidonet, and moved later to the Internet.

An editorial staff supervises the contents and brings the web-site up to date daily. It contains more than 1.100 web-pages and it is visited by a great number of subscribers, up to 15.000 a month. You can take part in the enterprise "Wolkenstein hunt", a project based on the learning of the local medieval historical events through the correct use of services offered by the web.

The Tangram Educational Centre is working on a new project now, to promote the knowledge of the local history through Internet, via Tele-learning system (distance education method).

In the last three years (1996 - 1999) we have worked on the historic figure of Oswald von Wolkenstein. Now the new project (probably for another three years, 1999 - 2002) is on "Ötzi" the mummy (5.000 years old), found in 1991 on the glacier of Similaun (South Tyrol).

One of the main projects:

The thriller "*Wolkenstein hunting*", launched as a computer competition under the support of the Ministry of Public Education and of the Autonomic Province of Bolzano, is at the disposal of all Internet users and in particular of all secondary and high schools if they want to get closer to local history and at the same time have fun with it.

The aims of computer didactics are not just the learning of historic-cultural aspects, but they also offer other hints of didactic character. You go from the rediscovery of the function of reading and writing for the distant communication to the search of historical sources as a methodology to verify the truth of the supplied information; from the consultation of the data-base to the meaning of the picture in the context of hypertext communication.

Logical-intuitive abilities are necessary to decode messages in ciphers. The historical file-cards, in fact, contain some questions written in codex which the player has to decode. He will be able to answer to the question only after having correctly understood the meaning of the text; then he will find the password that will allow him to enter the next file-card.

The Internet material is collected and developed by Mr. Alessandro Baccin, teacher, tourist guide and great expert of local history. The project has been tested for 6 months by the team of the agency. After this period, it was presented on the web-site in the Internet; under the patronage of the Italian Ministry of Education, the Autonomic Province of Bolzano and the Local Police Superintendent. The first part of the project was reserved exclusively for the Second High School and the University.

"Wolkenstein hunting" is an amazing itinerary in the history and culture of the late Middle Ages, centred on the life of a noble knight, well known in the German literature for his folk-poetry and ballads.

The first one refers to the story of the noble knight Oswald von Wolkenstein and his "land among the mountains", taken from a rich bibliography and therefore of absolutely historical value.

The second, referring to codex and messages in ciphers, is based on ability and decode competitions well known by university students.
Among the three sections (novel-history-codex) there are some correlations, which can help you to solve the quiz of the file-card.

I wish all the visitors of this site good luck to come to the conclusion of this game and see Oswald von Wolkenstein's manuscript.

The story starts with the imaginary theft of the "canzoniere" (collection of lyrics), a manuscript with more than 7.500 lines and written from dictation by at least eight amanuensis. The theft takes places in the historical archives of Merano. The thieves leave little tracks in many Internet sites and are able to escape the police for a long time, until they will be caught and arrested in a hotel in Vienna. The investigators however, won't be able to stop the intermediary, who will flee with the ancient manuscript.

Just at the conclusion an unexpected event will pop up in the investigations made till that point, but at the end the best investigators will be able to find the farm-house where the manuscript is hidden.

The Norfolk initiatives and concepts for guidance and counselling, the training of guidance and community workers; establishing guidance networks

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Nick Meyer

Editors remark:

NORFOLK

Norfolk is a south east region in England and part of Middle-England. The area has a long and renown history dating back to medieval times. Then it used to be a stronghold for the unique development of kingdom and a bonding between king and king's men and the building up of independent and at the same time obliged counties in the whole of England. The frugal situation of the county and its long borderline to the sea made it a perfect site for economic and civil development. Norwich, the capital of Norfolk, is famous for its medieval city and its impressing buildings, sacral and civic, executed by the then famous masons in a style called after them, masonry. The architectural scenery of Norwich is so symbolic for what is pictured as the Golden Age of England. For instance, Wensum Lodge, among others home of the Norfolk Adult Education Service - NAES - is itself part of the medieval city wall around the settlement of dwellers living alongside and with the river Wensum. Norwich used to be an administrative and royal place of exchange and a busy field for trade and warfare as well as a centre of religious activity - both in terms of forming an independent church from the Pope and in activities concerning the citizens, hospitals and schools.

The area is bordering onto the "knowledge production centre" Cambridge and connected with the formerly highly industrialised midlands (Manchester) and it is well connected to the capital of England. The region used to be very prosperous, the soil is humid and juicy and the so-called broadlands and fens are a paradise for birds and rodents and are very fertile for any kind of grain and elementary agricultural goods. The coast used to be a rich fishing ground for oysters and shellfish and fish production was a main branch of income and development, sided by the shipping industry with continuous development from the 17th century onwards. Norfolk played a very important role in World War II and during the Cold War as a starting and landing platform for the airforce and for the navy. A lot of soldiers used to be stationed there and this meant a flourishing demand for the distributive sector.

The deterioration of independent regional supply patterns and the concentration process in agriculture and fishing left the county lacking in much but its attractive landscape, its interesting livestock and its picturesque villages at the seaside. Nowadays

there is a rather big gap between the urban centre Norwich - offering jobs and qualifications, new specialised businesses and flourishing high tech offsprings. The famous East Anglia University and the interesting and unique range of historical monuments are only some of the assets of the urban centre. On the other hand there is the Norfolk region with a very high rate of unemployment, up to 30% in some parts of Norfolk, with poorly connecting means of transport to its scattered villages where the infrastructure of supply is breaking away. The poorer people cannot afford to consume locally and the retail shops cannot afford to supply locally. All this creates an ongoing rift between those who come to the region as travelling and consuming visitors or as summer guests or as fans, who have decided to live in a beautiful place of their choice or to establish a second home. And between those: who are neither mobile nor flexible in terms of social status, range of possibilities and personal obligations. The latter have little to no prospects in getting proper education leading to diversified qualifications - because of a lack of institutions and opportunities - nor a job in the area of Norfolk. Agreeable jobs are available but only if one has the appropriate qualification and is prepared to commute.

Helping to bridge this gap stands at the core of adult education in England. The adult education sector in England can be said to form a mixture of three interconnected but still independent traditions. One might be termed as the protestant tradition of self education, the other might be termed as the long tradition of civic self confidence and initiatives. The second tradition is tackling the issue of enhancing the participation of the many - making the layman an expert. The third tradition goes back to the strong labour and union movement with their determination to give chances to those who are less endowed. The adult education sector has been in a sandwich position for nearly two decades. The cutting of funding and the idea of competitiveness between sectors and among the individual institutions have also led to drying out the many sources and many offers addressing the ordinary adult learner. Competitiveness in ranking and the run for funding and subsidies have created a somehow disturbing situation for the adult education sector and its institutions. Schools, colleges and universities used to be inspired by the open tradition of the adult education sector and have tried to open their doors to those normally relegated. This doubtless positive vein of development has also created a great flaw. Everything has become channelled into some kind of schooling or university related training process. Nowadays there is another competition: those hunting more learners are better off than those with less. The adult education clientele has become a sort of battlefield for funding. The "poorer", "not so institutionalised" brother is confronted with a lack of means but also with very engaged teams of trainers, teachers and tutors and with a growing demand on the side of the learners.

The NAES has tried to find its way in the trenches by overcoming the negative side of competitiveness while at the same time securing its advantages. The NAES, in particular Nick Meyer as director of curriculum, has helped to initiate a networking structure, bringing together colleges, social service institutions, the university and training institutes and of course the NAES in the service of the broad range of adult learners. Courses offered are accredited by a panel of independent experts and allow the learner to know exactly what he will get from a course. The credit system available through courses is accepted all over England and allows the learner to build on a modular system of a learning ladder. All this works in the direction of widening access and participation in learning and working in the interest of a diversity of needs

for the learners. Accreditation does not only go for generally acknowledged qualification, for instance languages, it also goes for the complex difficult activities of daily life, like house-keeping for example.

The diversity of learners' needs is considered by the NAES as an obligation for a comprehensive and holistic offer of courses. The curriculum has to be well balanced, well balanced in terms of making the most of the nearly 900 tutors for the well being of the whole region and taking into account the difficulty of transport and lack of money. The curriculum has to take account of the highly motivated learner and above all of the not so sophisticated learner, who for instance wishes to know more about the diversity of fish in the region. The curriculum will offer courses for self growth and self assertiveness and physical and spiritual wellbeing, it will also offer courses in IT, ranging from beginner's level to upgrading specialist know how. (See "Computer Based Training and internet access for wider curriculum areas", Chapter 5).

The attempts by the NAES to improve the level of IT-related skills have also led to a quite singular step in transferring a University for Industry (Ufi). The Ufi-initiatives: the Ufi offers financial support for buying and using laptops in all of England in order to develop new forms of direct learning. Nick Meyer and David Jennings have convinced tutors to work in unfamiliar settings (pubs, cafés, libraries, community centres) and to win people to become interested in their kind of learning (See "Case studies").

Nick Meyer has been active in the field of guidance work from the beginning onwards, when this kind of activity was considered the most crucial instrument for making learners feel at ease, of meeting the supportive needs of learners and of giving them the kind of information, advice and tutoring necessary to go further. Nick Meyer has also been partner in a team of training providers for guidance workers of different levels of competence for different guidance situations. He has also helped to establish a link between the adult education sector as a provider of know how and proficiency in the field of guidance work, in particular with the SMEs in the region.

There is a rather large movement among the general public in the direction of making IT work for historical discoveries - kinds of oral and photographic history - and to use the potential of IT in reminiscence work. Reminiscence work is a generic term covering among others the work with the elderly or those suffering from the Alzheimer's disease as well as working with the securing memories for the historical "records". The second kind of reminiscence work has also entered into what is called community based learning, where learning, teaching professionals and tools in teaching and learning are made available for the public, in particular those over 40, to give them a range of offers for gliding into and not being left out from the Information Society's changes.

Guidance in Norfolk

(Nick Meyer)

Funding received through the Lifelong Learning Partnership has resulted in the establishment of the Information Advice and Guidance Project which is managed through the Careers Service. This project is aiming to establish a countywide network of guidance workers who, while not qualified as Careers officers, nevertheless provide an

information public service in meeting individuals and discussing with them their aspirations and training needs. The Initial Guidance course will be the main tool to train 120 people in guidance across Norfolk.

A set of national standards on guidance have recently been published. The courses will also be the mechanism by which the standards are disseminated. In this way it is hoped that a network working to quality standards will be put in place across the county.

"I'd rather have a new bucket"

April 1999

(Nick Meyer describes a pilot course on guidance run for employers and staff in small- and medium-sized enterprises)

Last summer, a group representing providers began giving a series of seminars on Employee Development Schemes (EDS) across Norfolk. The attendance was encouraging, especially from small and medium-sized businesses. Several individuals said that they were interested in setting up their own Employee Development Schemes and one offered to attend subsequent seminars and talk about their experience of marketing the idea to their staff and the responses received.

Following a successful Objective 4 bid, Deb Duncan (Norfolk and Waveney TEC), and I developed an Open College Network Course (OCN), Initial Guidance Skills in the Workplace. The aim of the course is to provide essential guidance skills to companies who wish to develop a culture of education and training in their organisation. The group was to meet for six weeks, in three-hour sessions once a week.

Twelve people enrolled on the first course as a result of Deb initially writing to, and the ringing, companies who had expressed an interest at the Employee Development Scheme seminars and which employed between 20 and 250 people. The result was encouraging and the first course had a waiting list. The group came from a variety of backgrounds; the Federation of Small Businesses, nursing homes, a security company, a retail store and a plant nursery.

Despite the diversity we identified a set of common aims in terms of what the participants wanted from the course. These included:

- + What can we do to use staff more effectively and what training is currently on offer?
- + What can we offer staff which benefits both the company and its employees?
- + How do we encourage ownership of responsibility and encourage staff to see themselves as assets rather than overheads?
- + Learn how to identify and develop skills and training needs in the workplace
- + How do we encourage people to be flexible in accepting training and change?
- + How do we offer an appropriate form of training to encourage staff loyalty?

The aims of the course and the learning outcomes developed for the OCN Certificate has elements in common with those identified by the participants, but there was a different set of preconceptions underpinning the two.

The content of the course was to look at how education and training needs could be identified, and served as an introduction to the theory and practice of guidance developing information bases, liaising with providers and supporting employees in their training.

After the first session I felt that we'd developed an agenda and several key issues were emerging. The first was the role of the employer in giving guidance to employees and the difference between that relationship and the more usual role of the community-based guidance worker. Another was the different attitudes within the group towards, on the one hand of the continuum, job-related training which addressed very specific skills needs, and at the other, the rationale for introducing Employee Development Schemes.

One participant described how he had convened a meeting of employees to explain that the company was going to contribute £30 towards the cost of a course to any employee who wished to take up the offer. This meeting explained how the scheme would work, and why the company was choosing to support individuals in that way. After listening carefully to his explanation, a cleaner said, "I'd rather have a new bucket".

Broadly, the course followed the pattern of a guidance interview. Initially there was considerable discussion about employees' and employers' aspirations and needs with regard to education and training. This corresponded to what can be thought of as the "exploration stage" in an interview. We discussed the meaning of the learning organisation, the importance of recognising the fact that adults bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the workplace, attitudes to formal education and in what situations training can address issues of performance.

The second phase of the course centred around information. This also corresponds to the second phase in a guidance interview. As well as providing information in the range of local colleges, adult education and other educational opportunities, there was discussion about funding streams and ways in which SMEs can access information as it becomes available about, for example, Objective 4.

At this point in the course, as so often happens when working with an individual client, a new set of objectives emerged. One member of the group was heard to say, "What I really wanted from the course was how to find out about whether or not a training provider will really do the business for you. I get so many calls from consultants and training providers who promise the earth, but I don't really know how to check on what they can offer and whether they'll meet my training needs."

This led to the group drawing up a check-list of specific needs and questions to ask, including details of course content, delivery methods, assessment methods and evaluation.

The final part of the course was centred around action-planning. All participants were asked to produce a personal development plan which would clearly show what action they were going to take after the course, both in relation to their own training and that of the company.

One participant said the course had provided her with guidance; another said that it made him reflect on his day practise as a manager; all said the course was fun and that they had gained a great deal from the role plays and the exercises on interviewing skills.

My overall impression was that working with a group which previously had very few links to be made, but the difficulty is overcoming the information barriers. As a result of the course, an Objective 4 bid was written with considerably more information about SME needs than otherwise would have been the case: there was a lot of interest in alternative methods of accreditation, and employee development schemes. Most surprisingly for me was the extent to which, after six sessions, the group had gelled, one person commenting, "I'm going to miss the course much more than I would have thought possible."

The Living Memory Centre in Norfolk

April 2000

"Funny how you remember"

based on material brought in by Nick Meyer (ed.)

The Living Memory Centre at Wensum Lodge in Norwich was opened in April 2000. The project follows on from 3 other initiatives in Norfolk: the RAFE-project, Pabulum and Lifetimes. The "Reminiscence Approaches with the Frail Elderly" (RAFE) project has offered reminiscence courses in the county during the last five years. More than 800 carers, nurses and other people have been trained to work with the elderly.

With the setting up of 22 memory boxes borrowed by residential homes and containing memorabilia from the 20s, 30s and 40s, the project has produced a resource pack.

In 1998 the charity Pabulum was established, its aim being to help people suffering from dementia who still live at home, by forming a group of reminiscence-trained volunteers to work with them. The Living Memory Centre was funded by an £ 81.000 grant from the Adult and Community Learning Fund and it builds on successful memory training.

Reminiscence, used to encourage people to activate their creativity by introducing arts, crafts and computers, is part of Pabulum's work in Lifetimes. Four Living Memory Centres will be established in Norfolk in residential homes or sheltered housing schemes for the elderly. Each centre will provide a room with memorabilia and furniture from the 40s and 50s to recreate life at that time. A separated area at each centre will

be provided for interactive sessions led by tutors and volunteers. With the use of computers photos, memories, sound recordings, video clips etc. can be recorded and stored to build up life histories. Later school children will be invited to attend life history lessons given by the elderly. More Living Memory Centres are planned at Hellesdon, Loddon, North Norfolk and Thetford.

With the help of these memorabilia in the re-created living rooms and the gentle sound of the gramophone in the background, elderly visitors are to be encouraged to dig into the memory boxes filled with relics from the past. The idea is that the pensioners see, hear, taste, touch and smell their pasts.

Project co-ordinator Margaret Plummer says: "We have witnessed the benefits of reminiscence time and time again. These rooms are not only places where elderly people can come and enjoy their memories, but also somewhere we can encourage regular activities. It is using triggers from the past, working through the five senses. We know from the work which has already been done in Norfolk with reminiscence that it is one of the few things that really works for those suffering dementia. It helps them and it helps their families and carers."

The results show that the project has had amazing effects on pensioners, helping them to regain self confidence. Some of them began conversations after having been silent for months. The elderly say that they feel better doing this and that they have made new friends.

Jess Horton, 76, a visitor at the opening of the Living Memory Centre in Norwich, was sitting in a re-created living room at Wensum Lodge, having a go at making a rag rug. He said: "This room takes me right back to my childhood. When I was a bit older, in the Navy, I used to make these rugs. Gave us something to do aboard the ship. Funny how you remember."

Cecil Dawson, an eighty-four-year-old cricket fan suffering from Alzheimer's disease, who was also among the guests at Wensum Lodge, has recreated his childhood and early adulthood for the past few months in the form of a living memory book, with the help of his carer Sheila Hawkes. Whenever he looks at the photographs and notes in the book his memories start coming back. It has encouraged him to share his lifetime of memories with those around him. His carer Sheila says: "The life history which he has done is something which will always remind him in the future. He was an expert cricket player and has had an incredibly interesting life. Now he will be able to talk about it."

Computer-based training and internet access for wider curriculum areas

David Jennings

Proposals For Integrating Information Technology Into Wider Curriculum Areas Using CBT

Terms of reference

To investigate the potential use and implementation of CBT as a learning tool in the Adult Education Service. For the purpose of this project report, CBT is taken to encompass the use of any interactive computer based training material.

Purpose Of Project

The Norfolk Adult Education Service (NAES) needs to consider ways of integrating Information Technology into a wider curriculum and using Information Technology as a learning resource to facilitate the learning process. This action will allow us to increase participation opportunities for learners and maximise income potential for the NAES.

Overview Of Current Situation

At present the Norfolk Adult Education Service uses Information Technology to teach applications such as word-processing, spreadsheets, databases, desktop publishing and computerised accounts. These courses are offered in 46 locations and in 1996/7 totalled 421 classes with nearly 3500 students.

In doing so we serve a countywide need, however, we are only scratching the surface of what Information Technology is able to offer. Take-up of existing course places continues to be healthy. However, as more and more students become computer literate they begin to look for different ways to make use of their newly acquired skills. Whilst those in employment may be able to increase their use of information technology in their work, a significant proportion wish to utilise the technology available to enhance their leisure time. It is with this in mind that this project is written.

Opportunities

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can be exploited across a wide range of curricula to enhance both understanding and enjoyment of a subject. To facilitate new experience and widen learning opportunities and especially to facilitate open learning in rural areas.

ICT can be used to access information from the web to not only enhance any subject

or project but also in turn raise awareness of other similar projects in existence worldwide.

Computer Based Learning/Training (CBT) can also be used to enhance open learning and facilitate group learning where individuals are working on different subjects or subject areas. CBT is now widely used to provide interactive training using differing scenarios. Learners can be given set scenarios with a variety of outcomes. The outcome is dependent on the decisions made by the learner and the answers they give to the questions they are presented with.

These programs are used across a wide range of subjects and areas including driver training, customer services, financial services, accountancy, and advocacy. CBT is also used to teach foreign languages with learners being able to study at their own pace and in their own location. Any such use of CBT, if it is to be successful, has to be supported with tutorial sessions on a regular basis.

Use of CBT can enhance research, when combined with CD-ROM material, both as reference and interactive. The subjects are brought to life and can make the research more enjoyable and easier for learners to assimilate.

Benefits of using CBT

There are many benefits in using CBT, large national and international companies including financial organisations and training providers have appreciated these benefits for many years.

Benefits can be thought of in two ways, the first and some may say the most important is to the learner and the second is to the organisation.

Benefits to the learner

- Learners can learn at their own pace
- Learners can learn more quickly
- Learners need not repeat previously completed study
- Learners can learn in their own location (providing they have access to computer equipment)
- Learners can study at a time to suit them
- Interactive learning can often be more effective than traditional learning
- Just in time training

Let us look at these benefits in more detail.

Learners learn at their own pace

Because traditional teaching is group based, learners can often feel that they are progressing at a rate, which is either too slow, or too fast. Even individual one-to-one training can often be paced wrongly as learners can feel threatened and not able to ask a trainer to adjust the pace of delivery.

CBT is largely an individual experience, it allows learners to proceed as quickly or slowly as they wish. This also allows for flexibility of time and regularity.

Learners can learn more quickly

When learners learn at their own pace they tend to learn quicker. Once learning becomes a habit the learning rate is accelerated.

Learners need not repeat previously completed study

Learners who wish to fill in gaps in their learning experience can utilise CBT to make up their knowledge deficit without having to attend a complete course of instruction. CBT allows a learner to personalise their training to suit their own needs.

Learners can learn in their own location

Providing they have access to computer equipment they are able to study without the need for travel. CD-ROM material can be sent through the post at little cost, it is very robust and difficult to damage. This option is of great benefit to those learners who may be housebound or live in rural areas where transport is limited.

Learners can study at a time to suit them

Whilst regular study and training is important it is not always practical in our modern world. Many people have jobs that require them to work shifts or irregular hours. For these learners CBT can often be the only way to access the learning experience.

Interactive learning can often be more effective than traditional learning

CBT and interactive learning can be useful for those learners who would not wish to return to a traditional style learning environment. If potential learners have experienced a bad time at school or have been put off learning through poor achievement levels CBT can be used as a means of learning without classroom perception.

Just in time training

Learners are able to access learning and gain knowledge when they need it most. Learners may not be in a position to wait until a course begins to begin their learning. They can also utilise CBT as a means of revision or recapping, for instance before a job interview.

Benefits to the service

- CBT makes learning possible where traditional learning would not be viable or cost effective
- CBT offers a consistent message
- Learning can be offered at flexible times and locations thereby maximising income potential
- CBT can be used for effective staff training

CBT makes learning possible where traditional learning would not be viable or cost effective

Because of the flexible and self-paced nature of CBT it allows us to offer training to learners who would normally be excluded from traditional courses through either access or time constraints. At present if these potential learners are lost to the Service they are either excluded from learning or are quickly soaked up by our competitors. Lost potential learners equals lost potential income and the loss of repeat enrolments.

CBT offers a consistent message

This benefit comes from the fact that CBT offers the same message and training delivered in the same way and checks the learners progress in the same way wherever it is used. This allows for consistent training and consistent quality of learning.

Learning can be offered at flexible times and locations thereby maximising income potential

Being able to offer training opportunities at times and in locations to suit the needs of the learner offers great benefits. The Service is able to increase income potential by attracting more learners. The Service is also able to utilise mobile technologies to offer training in non-traditional venues that may have reduced costs, i.e. church rooms, pubs, learner's front rooms etc.

CBT can be used for effective staff training

With increased time constraints on staff and continued pressure for the Service to train its staff and, rightly offer self-improvement opportunities to all its employees CBT can play a useful part. CBT can be used to facilitate just in time learning. This can allow staff to be trained for specific tasks as and when needed. This offers substantial cost savings, if we take the cost of a days MSWord 6 training as £350 per delegate each time a delegate needs to be trained or refreshed. The cost of a similar CBT package "Training for Word 6" costs £79.95 and can be used many times whenever it is needed, and at a time to suit the individual learner.

Implementation

Implementation has principle 5 stages.

- Where is it going to be used?
- How should it be promoted to learners?
- How is it going to be publicised?
- How will it be administered?
- How will it be supported?

Let us look at each of these stages in turn.

Where is it going to be used?

In an ideal world we would be able to implement new technologies and ideas across the whole Service, however due to the financial ramifications in launching any new project it is best to pilot CBT in one area and analyse the results before proceeding with a county wide roll-out.

The Service also needs to consider the technology needed to run CBT packages and where this is available. Clearly advanced computer packages have minimum technical requirements. As the Service rents most of the computer equipment it uses, it would be best to pilot the use of CBT on equipment and in premises that it owns and is therefore able to utilise when it is needed by the learners.

Consideration also needs to be given to the fact that most interactive CBT programs require audio and therefore there is a need for privacy when learning is taking place. Ideally this would be achieved by the use of screening between workstations, howe-

ver in practical circumstances this is usually achieved with headphones for each learner.

How should it be promoted to learners?

Selling CBT to learners depends largely on it first being sold to tutors and managers. CBT has to be accepted by all involved before being sold to the learner. Learners must be able to see the benefits of CBT as mentioned above.

Effective marketing is needed to promote the benefits of CBT and the benefits of technology in general. This needs to be the key feature of any promotion. Open sessions at the IT Study Centre and community based demonstrations can be used to help with this, however this type of activity is resource intensive and can be expensive to run, this needs to be born in mind when costing course fees.

How is it going to be publicised?

As with any new initiative, publicity must be exciting and thought provoking. Publicity needs to be positive and show how CBT can enhance learning as a new method and not be seen as a threat to existing learning methods. Tutors need to be fully involved in promotional activities and be seen to fully support the concept of CBT.

Information needs to be circulated to all possible customers including schools, employers, clubs and organisations.

How will it be administered?

The administration of CBT covers 5 main areas:

1. The equipment
2. The booking of time on PCs
3. Supporting material
4. Ensuring learners are comfortable with the technology
5. Dealing with problems learners may have with the equipment.

The equipment needs to be properly maintained and in good working order. Any technical problems, which arise during a learning session, can and will lead to learner reluctance and negative response to both CBT and the associated technology, thus negating the benefits.

Booking of time on the PCs is crucial. If PC time is double booked this will again lead to the learners feeling negative about the whole set-up. If CBT is to be used alongside traditional learning strategies then learners need to feel confident that they are able to book time to suit their learning needs. This involves being able to have regular use of IT facilities. This leads us to consider how many learners we accept on any one course. The time available on PCs will, obviously, be limited by the number of machines available.

Supporting material needs to be professionally written and aimed at the right level of study. It is no use trying to use entry level material for advanced courses or vice versa. Support material also needs to be tailored to learners needs. When purchasing or writing support material you should ask yourself 3 questions:

1. Is it at the correct level
2. Does it support learners needs
3. Is it up to date and relevant.

It is essential that learners are comfortable with the technology before they commence with CBT. Any resistance to computers will negate the benefits of CBT to such an extent that any value would be questionable. It is likely that learners will need to have attended a basic introduction to computers before commencing to use CBT.

Equipment needs to be well-maintained and easy to use if CBT is to be successful. Where it is being used as a learning resource outside of a regular class this becomes vital. Where learners have limited time and access to a computer downtime can be disastrous.

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How will it be supported?

Getting the support to learners right is vital when using CBT. If CBT is used for remote learning it is all too easy for learners to feel remote. Whilst there are considerable benefits to being able to study at your own time and at your own pace it is essential that you are able to contact someone for support and guidance when it is needed. Support can be given in many ways but the two most likely choices would be regular tutorials and telephone support. Where CBT is used at a distance the tutorials should where possible be held in or near to the learners location. As previously discussed learners may not be able to travel to a recognised learning location, hence the need to use CBT.

Telephone support is useful for two things. Firstly it can give instant support at the time of most need i.e. when the problem actually arises. Secondly it keeps the learner in contact with the tutor without having to travel; it also allows the learner to ask questions they may feel unhappy asking in a group tutorial.

The main problem with telephone support is the cost of support time, however without investing this resource the distance element of CBT is likely to fail.

Threats

The use of ICT has however two main drawbacks. The first of these involves tutors. Tutors will inevitably need training in the use of the equipment and media. Whilst training could be achieved in-house there will still be cost implication. The second drawback is the initial capital outlay, good CD-ROM media and licences are not cheap, neither is the technology on which it operates. Internet connections and telephone usage also has a cost implication so careful husbandry of resources is essential.

There are two main threats to successfully using CBT as a learning tool, the first is a real threat the second is largely a perceived threat.

The use of CBT will fail if it is marketed to the wrong audience for the wrong reasons, i.e. cost cutting or downsizing of the workforce. The use of CBT is not suitable for everyone and should be used with care ensuring that learners are suited to this individualised form of learning. Detailed TNAs need to be completed and learner's progress will need to be monitored to ensure that CBT remains the best option for

them. Costing of courses on CBT also needs to be tailored to the market for which it is used. If CBT is being used in the commercial sector it needs to be costed at a price that reflects its value to a potential buyer, cheap prices are seen as cheap courses with little or no value. However when it is used as a distance learning tool for NAES learners it needs to be priced so as it is not prohibitive and therefore unattractive and marginalised.

The second threat is often perceived by staff as threatening their jobs and livelihood. It is often thought that new ideas and technology will replace the established ideas and practices. With CBT this is definitely not the case. CBT should be used to support and complement existing learning methods, as this is the only way its use can be successful. Staff will need to be consulted as CBT is both planned and implemented so they feel a sense of ownership and have a chance to input ideas and suggestions for best use of this new use of technology. If the staff are not happy with CBT they are hardly likely to sell the benefits of using it to their students.

Implementation Trial

By giving learners access to a PC connected to the Internet and E-mail they can (following training) access and download course work which can then be worked on without the need for individual personal computers. With E-mail, learners could also upload questions and receive answers from a remote tutor. Video conferencing can also be used to offer tutorials to a group of learners who may not all be in the same location or even in the same country. Obviously there needs to be a substantial amount of face to face human interaction at regular intervals during the life span of any course.

There is potential for a trial project in a remote area of the county based on a community learning model. This could involve students learning about their local area from different perspectives to achieve a holistic study. This could include the local history, geography, geology, foreign influences and languages, labour market intelligence and influences upon it, economic influences etc. This data could then be stored on a computer to be manipulated later to produce reports, electronic presentations, statistics and even a web site.

This type of initiative would automatically involve other curriculum areas in the one project; this would also have the beneficial effect of offering new and innovative learning experiences.

The first step in this process is for Curriculum Managers to identify tutors who are responsive to CBT and who are able to use the technology with confidence. The Curriculum Managers and identified tutors will then need to examine examples of material and choose titles they would wish to be used. This data can be compiled into a draft list, which can then be priced. At present once the media has been purchased it can be used in conjunction with the existing NAES laptop technology thereby allowing courses to be held at different locations. Internet access would initially be limited to group use via an OHP and LCD panel. Equipping a business dedicated Information Technology centre at Wensum Lodge would cost in excess of £12,000, however this could also be used to support the use of Information Technology in

wider curriculum areas when not being used by the Enterprise Unit.

Conclusions

Even with all the above-mentioned constraints, I propose we further investigate the use of Computer Based Training and further use Information Communication Technology to widen participation and enhance learning experiences for the individuals. As mentioned the trial project may be the best way to start, however, this would need to be preceded by a local survey and needs analysis to ascertain viability of any proposed project. Once it was seen to be viable any project would need to have sufficient resources to be sustainable for the life of the project.

I would envisage allowing 3 months for research and development of any project, 6 months for the initial life of the project and 3 months to analyse and co-ordinate the results. Whilst the project will not initially need full time attention it will need to be well planned and monitored to ensure its success.

'I paid for a tutor, not a computer'

David Jennings

ICT usage within the Norfolk Adult Education Service (NAES)

The concept of wider usage of ICT is one that is just beginning to take hold. The idea has been used with older students on residential weekends with great success. The acceptance of ICT as a research tool is one that will largely aid the spread of usage and acceptance of the University For Industry when it is launched later in the year (1999). It is thought that if this is not the case the UFI will not be a success, especially in attracting those who may not normally access training and education.

The NAES is working with Pabulum to use ICT as a tool to deliver study and communications skills in the remote areas of North Norfolk. This project is largely aimed at those over 50, however it has an element of cross generation study and sharing of experience. The project will be staffed by volunteers who have been trained by experienced, qualified, professional Adult Education tutors.

The project does not intend using CBT at this stage, it will highlight the usage of the role, which supported ICT has in a modern learning environment. CBT in itself is of limited use with students who are not familiar with computers or distance and self-motivated learning. It is hoped that this will be a way forward for the future once the ICT is firmly embedded within a learning context

The Service has used CD-ROM material within a learning environment, however this has had a varied reception. Acceptance of this type of material has depended on the individual learning styles of the student involved. The vast majority have seen CD-ROM as a novelty rather than having much value within the learning process. The idea supported by the comment "I paid for a tutor not a computer" seems to be one, which we hear a lot. This hurdle to individualised learning is one that will need to be over-

come if CBT is to be used to a greater degree than at present. This said, I believe that once the benefits have been fully explained, acceptance will follow.

The individualised basis of CBT learning needs to be managed correctly from the beginning. This will necessitate tutor support, often in the form of telephone support. This is especially true in rural areas. Students need to be able to contact a "human" voice rather than a computer generated helper!

All this must be taken in context and in the realisation that the NAES has not had the resources available to it at this stage to implement a fully supported CBT approach to training.

The Learning Village

We were unsuccessful in our attempt to obtain more money from the EEDA to fund the Learning Village project, however we have started to work on this idea with Pabulum. This will enable us to use their contacts and volunteers to staff the project, while we offer our IT resources and expertise. There are 2 taster sessions planned for the summer and the project proper is set to begin in the autumn.

The project will utilise laptop technology and will give access to the WWW and demonstrate its benefits as a research/study tool. All the sessions will be tutor supported with a higher than normal tutor/student ratio, it is expected that this will be on the basis of one:three. As tutors will be volunteers cost will not be an issue, however quality, as always, will need to be paramount and this will be carefully monitored through the life of the project.

As this project will be open ended there will be ample opportunity for the students to have a say on input into the lessons. Courses of study will be student centred and focus on the needs of the learner, both in terms of social and economic objectives.

CLAIT Workbook

The CLAIT workbook is at present only available on paper, however this situation is being looked at present. The level for this qualification is deemed to be beginner. This is determined by the OCR (Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts) awarding body, formally RSA. The standards for delivery material are set by the Norfolk Adult Education Service and must be strictly adhered to by any tutor wishing to use material which they have developed themselves. The workbook, which was submitted, was written by myself and my colleagues and has been used in one form or another for 4 years. The version that you have has been updated to work with the newest version of Microsoft Office. Updating has been undertaken by myself in conjunction with my wife. The idea being that if a person who is not computer literate can use it then it is fit for the purpose. Updating is a problem as software changes so quickly, however the basic functions a student needs to be able to perform remain fairly constant.

This has led to a problem in that the more my wife has used it the more literate she has become, ergo it must be of some use. Over 400 students have also used the workbook in the last 3 years with high levels of achievement and student retention.

The comprehensive approach taken within the workbook is to enable the workbook to be used in isolation if needed. This has been useful for those learners who are happy to proceed in this way. For those learners who do not wish to take this route it is used mainly as an aid memoir or in times when the tutor is busy with another student. This latter use is also good for experienced users who wish to update to new software or as a memory jogger.

Learners who undertake an IT course with the NAES all receive regular feedback. The courses take the form of example, practice, practice assignment, full assignment. At each stage of this process their understanding is checked and full feedback is given. A record of individual progress is kept and learners have access to this at any time they wish. If this workbook is to be used as a distance learning tool, feedback schedules will need to be established and adhered to, as will a programme of opportunities for one-to-one tutorials. At present all learners work within an IT centre environment and are supported by a tutor who is freely available to give and receive feedback.

The hurdles for learners new to computers are mainly to do with the media perception of computers, many new users believe that if they touch the wrong button the computer will be destroyed, along with most of the rest of the modern world. Publicity like that surrounding the millennium bug does little to help this situation. During the first session on any course the learners have the opportunity to play with the computers and test out how rugged they really are (it is at this stage that we pray that they do not crash). Once learners are happy that they cannot destroy the world from a village hall in North Norfolk they often become addicted to the computer and we have resistance to the session ending.

Learning Outputs For Workbook Designers

For me the main learning outcome as a workbook designer is the need to be able to remember what it was like to be a beginner. It is important to demystify the language and the terminology. Learners do not need to know the internal workings of a PC to be able to use one, if necessary this will come later. One does not need to be a mechanic to drive a car. The ability to have someone to test the workbook before release from the point of view of a non IT literate user is also a godsend. This enables you to solve any problems or misunderstanding of language before it is printed and distributed. The second and vital point is pictures, all learners like pictures and adult learners are no exception to this. Lots of bright diagrams and clear instructions will greatly aid in the acceptance and use of a workbook.

Laptop Initiative - Case Studies

Two examples of OFL-projects brought in by David Jennings

LIFETIMES / February 2000

Lifetimes aims to provide learning and creative activities in the community. Its aim is to reach older people, particularly those that are isolated, lacking in services or excluded from this kind of activity for whatever reason. **Learn In a Fun Environment** is

the motto of the project. Lifetimes is a *pabulum* project, *pabulum* is a registered charity, in partnership with Norfolk Age Concern, Adult Education Services, Deaf Association and Alzheimer's Disease Society.

Norfolk Adult Education Services has provided ICT taster sessions as part of the projects aim to develop learning experiences for older people. Two sessions were provided. Both sessions took place in a day centre for the elderly in Sheringham, North Norfolk. Laptops, printers and scanners were provided on the day.

Successes

- One gentleman discovered that the course he had enrolled on (a distance learning package) was not really suitable for his needs.
- An elderly lady sent her first e-mail to her daughter in Southampton
- One couple left with a list of hardware needs and information about Adult Education courses they could do together.
- One gentleman managed to scan in a picture of himself as Santa Claus and created and printed a number of business cards using this picture!
- The most worthwhile for me personally was gentleman in his eighties who asked about information about a ship he was nearly on during the war. The ship was the *RMS Lancastria*. When this was sunk it was the largest loss of life in a single sinking during WW2. This gentleman was re-routed at the last minute to a different ship just before the sinking but his brother was on board. He had looked for information about the ship for 40 years and had limited success. Before he had finished telling us why he wanted the information I had found two sites dedicated to the ship and a list of related books. Further searches revealed two more sites, the title of a book he had read some years earlier and was now out of print, two out of print bookstores in the Norwich area and a contact name for a society dedicated to the *Lancastria*. In addition we e-mailed to the society and arranged for further information to be passed on. He was so pleased that it brought a tear to his eye. This was enormously satisfying.

Addendum

The following are quotes from participants during these sessions:

- "It is such a relief. I thought that it was all going to be so hard"
- "It is so nice to know something about this computer thing everyone talks about"
- "I've wondered what all those WWW letters were all about on the adverts, now I know!"
- "Didn't you bring any good games to play? I regularly thrash my grandchildren!"
- After explaining the purpose of those free Internet CD's...
"I'm so glad that you explained that, I thought I had to buy a computer to get my TV working properly"
- After finding information on the Internet
"You have really made my day. I can't thank you enough. This is truly wonderful. Thank you."

And finally a word of caution

- "This Internet stuff will lead to the destruction of the World you know. It will lead to a civilisation of mindless zombies addicted to the screen, a world where no one ever meets another person or wishes to. The old will be forgotten because they don't have the skills to keep up and the young will forget because they don't need to remember anything anymore. Mark my words, you youngsters are creating a monster to end all monsters"

You have been warned...

Laptop Initiative - Case Study 2

Caister Camera Club

As a keen photographer myself I was delighted when the Caister Camera Club asked if we could provide some basic training in Windows and Mac computing. Many of the members have moved to digital darkrooms and were struggling to master Windows and PhotoShop at the same time. I arranged for a number of laptops to be available at one of their regular club meetings and installed PhotoShop on one machine (we only have one site license) and shareware alternatives on the others. Scanners and printers were also used. There were 16 members present.

Members of the club familiar with Windows practised scanning while I took a group through the basics of Windows file management and navigation, discussing the difference between Macs and PC's as we went. By half time the session had become a hands on event which everyone participated in and in which the more experienced users passed on knowledge about using the software to beginners. The evening produced some interesting photo effects and there was a plea for more classes as soon as possible.

The event led me to believe that there is a lot of scope in classes aimed at the amateur photographer interested in 'going digital'. Indeed within two weeks of the session I was approached by three camera clubs in the area, all asking for similar help!

6. GLOSSARY

Editor's remarks

We have pastiched so to say original definitions by REREAL partners in order to present a multi-lateral understanding of terms used by the REREAL project. All the definitions are derived from practice and practical work. None of them is a borrowing from general bookish definitions, all of them are practical tools.

The REREAL team wanted to let the reader see how contextual backgrounds immerse into language usage and term usage.

Contributions have been brought in by:

Gitta Stagl (Austria)

Margarethe Wallmann (Austria)

Nick Meyer (England)

Pirjo Keinänen (Finland)

Roman Nagorski (Poland)

Mihai Jigau (Romania)

Björn Garefelt (Sweden)

Allessandro Baccin / Darma de Pretis-Gallmetzer (Italy)

This glossary serves three intentions:

- It gives a unique view on notions in the REREAL group of terms that are often used in different ways.
- It allows the reader to understand how decisive it is to clarify terms and practice in OFL.
- It allows us to get a historical understanding for the way learning works in heterogeneous groups.

We will start with this work in Finland. I will take home your paper files and get an overview on where things go and come together and where there are different concepts. I will document the two sides.

Please, fill in this glossary in the following way:

- you answer briefly and in an authentic way
- you don't quote what others have defined
- you embed your definition in the context of your work and your work only
- you can always add more to your own file after Finland
- you can comment and exchange with others on notions and opinions

LIST OF TERMS

access and access opportunities

In German we have two closely related words: Zugang and Zugänglichkeit: the two and their relationship express my understanding of these terms. Everybody has

his/her way of approaching. Everybody should be allowed to make best use of his/her own way of approaching.

possibilities to get education or information about education

Access may mean the means by which courses are made more easily available to students

Or: a range of courses which provide both an introduction to a provider's range of programmes

Access courses are a bridge to Higher Education for adults

When we talk about open and flexible learning (OFL) we deal with, on the one hand, *physical access* to computers and the Internet, i.e. with the spread of technical infrastructure in the form of transmission instruments like fibre optical cables and also with access to computers which are compatible with the new forms of transmission. High speed access to the Internet is also necessary. Computers must be available for everyone at public places, in organisations and at home - all over the country!

Mere physical access to computers is no guarantee that people can use the technique for studies and obtaining information etc. It is also a question of *accessibility*, where people learn about and develop competency in the new technology in order to use it according to their needs; to take part in courses conducted partly or completely as distance courses, to access general public information. Real accessibility to flexible learning often demands local mentoring and a study group to communicate with. Also necessary is access to a sufficiently broad offering of courses which correspond to people's different needs.

assessment (role, character, methods, functions)

an assessment is a kind of judgement that tries to stick to clear parameters and judges performance in the light of these parameters only. This kind of assessment is essential in OFL, it forms one of the pillars of confidence in student-material-tutor interaction. Assessment by the tutor is a clearly laid out commenting feedback on goals, level of competence in set tasks with the aim of fine-tuning next steps in achievement. The assessment is mainly verbal and discursive, aiming at allowing the student to interfere between his working/learning process and a better understanding for the objectives. The assessment itself is an instrument for reflecting on learning, learning aims and learning means. In the course of the assessment the student learns to practice self-assessment and use the latter as a methodical tool in his learning.

In terms of NVQs the identifying of an individual's competencies in relation to a range of nationally defined standards.

Normally a function of the tutor in determining the individual student's progress against a set of agreed objectives.

This has both an individual and a collective aspect. Swedish popular education stresses the learner centred approach as well as the group processes in learning.

The feedback on goals must be dealt with both on an individual and on a group basis. Self-assessment is vital.

feedback to the learner and / or the basis for delivering a certificate

tutor/teacher is measuring with different methods the process and results of learning

or students are using self-assessment as a method to become conscious of their learning process

assessment criteria for learning outcomes (relative weight of knowledge, skills, attitudes)

The first criteria for assessment is the capacity to distinguish between knowledge, skills and attitudes. The knowledge side must become evident against the background of the learner's knowledge, the subject knowledge and methodical knowledge. The skills must be shown in their relation to life and social skills, specialist skills and general cognitive and perceptive skills. The attitude side has to be shown in the context of learning techniques and reflective activity of learning from experience. The adult learner has already shown his/her capacity to become knowledgeable in a range of fields. He/she must be helped to become aware of the range of skills and sub-skills he/she has already applied and how to transfer them. He/she can learn by analysing and understanding one's own and effective and suitable attitudes.

knowledge (definition)

a body of data, facts, insights, meta-cognitions, thoughts and methodical and intuitive procedures of connecting as an individual in order to make sense

The acquisition of knowledge which enables an individual to generalise to other areas of related knowledge

Has two components: an intellectual / theoretical one developed especially in the school and by one's one study, and a practical one, developed in the active process of exercising some ability. They lead to a cognitive structure that enables the individual to act properly in every situation.

"data, information, knowledge, wisdom" is the hierarchy of knowledge, where knowledge is deeper information, with metacognitive skills

skills (definition)

a cluster of instruments, techniques and methods acquired and applied with purpose - either combined or single - for specific goals of learning and acquiring knowledge and practical know-how. Each of them and all of them are refined through extensive and purposeful practice.

The demonstration of competence

Knowledge and skills to solve (practical) problems, skills are relative to circumstances, without certain circumstances you can't show your skills

to know how one can do it and to be able to do it

attitude (definition)

the spectrum of conscious and unconscious access forms and ways of dealing with new situations, new tasks, in particular the task of steering through unknown territory and making best use of steering instruments and navigation techniques of all kinds (systematic, ingenuous, careful, brave...)

The affective response towards any given stimulus

way to meet things, information, people, situations

One important point is to focus on the capacity and the resources of the learner/group and to strengthen the awareness of this in the study group. The adult learners must not look upon themselves as "empty bags" that shall be filled with "knowledge", "skills" or whatever by the teachers/institutions, they shall become subjects - not objects.

assessment tools

Tools for assessment in OFL are personal support and all kinds of distance support; the main tool is definitely the tool-istic layout-design for the setting and material in learning and the coherence of solid support and a well-thought out assessment design for active participation, quality of work and level of achievement. Assessment tools are clearly set and isolable objectives and checklists, forms of tutorial assessment and feedback; peer-group and team work techniques and learning outcomes-related forms for control and self-control

The range of assessment methods e.g. exams, observation, project work, discussion etc. which identifies an individual's competence

The tradition in popular education, especially the folk high schools, that stresses the importance of a personal relationship between the students and the teachers makes the "assessment" both easier and more "to the point" and can at the same time be less formalised. These qualities must of course be preserved in different kinds of distance studies within popular education.

certificated learning

prepares for, leads to and ends with a certificate awarded by an examination body

A programme of learning which results in an assessment of the acquisition of knowledge and skills and which leads to the individual receiving a certificate testifying to the successful completion of the programme

confirmation of a learning activity, description of learning outcomes and / or the level (degree) of achievement of the standardised learning objectives

collective guidance

when a group or a team (of expressed learners) asks for/and or gets professional support from a non-group member for their work by a field specialist in guidance/mentoring/coaching

Group guidance - normally a programme in which a group of people identify their further education or training needs and develop the ability to successfully develop an action plan and to put it into practice

Form of guidance with a homogeneous or heterogeneous group of persons in which the involvement of each person is increased due to the common problem that is to be solved.

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criteria evaluation

an evaluation that bases its results on criteria that have been developed in order to allow an outside- but nevertheless fitting and detailed perspective on inner dynamics and mechanism

Evaluation against pre-determined criteria which are either set as objectives or standards

standardised assessment of learning outcomes**delivery modes**

are forms and methods of learning and teaching practices

For a detailed report on these matters see "Popular Education as Distance Learning" published by The Swedish National Council of Adult Education" in English within the REREAL project.

A few comments only: The term "open" is seldom used within popular education for the simple reason that the very essence of these activities is that they are open to, in principle, everybody. The term "distance learning" is used in popular education, but it has become obvious that the understanding of the term is very different in different adult education institutions and therefore provides very little information in itself. The differences in pedagogical views are of course also reflected in distance learning.

The term "flexible learning", though it might seem a bit vague, is a more constructive term, since it focuses on the learner-centred perspective, where "distance" is only one aspect of flexible learning. The discussion and practise has to be developed however. Some conflict elements can already be identified. The conflicts between for example the individual freedom to study whenever or wherever is best, contra the students' need to have a functioning group to communicate with is quite clear. This has impact on pedagogical and organisational decisions.

distance

this can be anything from phone to internet where the main method of interacting is done over a distance (regardless whether highly supported or mainly self-directing)

A programme where a student does not have direct face to face contact with a tutor

physical separation of the learner from the teacher (trainer), learning process supported by a tutor (guidance, mentoring, control)

Forms and methods of distance learning by using various available instruments of transmission

flexible

this can be a rich variety of learning where the learner has a lot of freedom in terms of place/time/subject/learning pace and style/achievements

The provision of a programme which the student can access according to his/her own need or circumstances

one can learn at any time and in any place convenient

methods, time, place, speed of learning can be individual

open - 'face-to-face'

open learning of this kind offers a richness of flexibility and combines them with the advantages of tailor-made face-to-face teaching/tutoring supplies

A programme in which most of the study is done by the student and the tutor acts as mentor

Visual communication between two persons in the same environment or via video-conferencing

no restrictions, except for natural formal ones, to participate in an educational undertaking (a course)

open - distance

open learning offered through any kind of distance delivery (correspondence, telephone, e-mail, Internet-based) with the aim of allowing freedom of time, place and pace with the help of institutional as well as personalised support

open - IT supported

a specific brand of open-learning where either the delivery-mode includes IT-support or /and the whole course is done via IT: e.g. material-supply, feed-back, task- and progress-assessment, tutoring

Learning at a distance which is supported by e-mail, internet or CD ROM

open - self-study supported

this kind of open learning focuses around the idea of self-study and autonomous learning and supports this way of learning with professional support (resources, guidance, coaching, tutoring)

There is very little supported "distance" or "open" learning offered within the Service. In recent years there have been a number of government initiatives aimed at introducing open learning, but the findings seem to be fairly consistently that individuals benefit from the structures which regular meetings

provide and from having the support of peers. Although many NVQs presuppose that a considerable amount of time needs to be spent on collecting evidence of competence, for the great majority of "academic" subjects, there has been a reversion to working with groups. This has inevitably meant that some people are in danger of being excluded, and so there has been greater emphasis on delivering flexible courses, for example "Basic Skills in the Workplace" or "Languages for Business".

differing levels of guidance

Guidance can either be very practical with the aim of collecting and informing information on specialist fields; in education, in particular adult education, this could be a place and/or a telephone enquiry and/or data-bank where people can service themselves in their search for courses on offer/ or get the information as a kind of service; Guidance can be more in the vein of helping people to make their choices (this kind is more client-orientated) and takes into account the circumstances of the learner and his choice. A more in-depth version of guidance combines expert-knowledge in the field, counselling-activities and the coaching work of bringing the learner/client on the move and give assistance and time to reflect and re-orientate

The government has recently introduced the "Information, Advice and Guidance" project, which is mainly delivered through Careers Services being responsible to Lifelong Learning Partnerships. The notions of information, advice and guidance effectively define the different levels of activity.

Information is simply the providing of accurate factual information to enquirers. Advice is more detailed and the guidance worker takes into account the background and identified learning needs of the potential student and makes an informed judgement about the most appropriate form of action. This might include consideration of the teaching methods employed, making a choice between qualifications and selecting the most suitable tutor for a particular student.

Guidance involves the first two activities but also may include counselling, assessment, advocacy, networking and enabling the potential student to consider the most appropriate form of education and training in the context of his or her career. Frequently people come for guidance at an important stage of life-change - when children are starting school or leaving home or even when the client is approaching retirement. Unsurprisingly, therefore, a large percentage of users of a guidance service are women who are seeking to re-enter the job market and are seeking help with making a choice about the most appropriate choice of new career.

guidance to get your way out of unemployment

career guidance

educational guidance

guidance to help self-studies

distinction between guidance/teaching/training

guidance takes care of the circumstances and preliminaries of learning and supports the learner on his way to/into and while learning. Teaching is focused on conveying subject knowledge and methodical knowledge. Guidance tasks and activities are more integrated where teaching is shifting towards tutoring. Training is sometimes used interchangeable with teaching, when it comes to short-time courses with practical outcomes. Training is sometimes used as a contrast to teaching: learning by doing, with hands-on practices, active and lively. In some countries training is used for vocational education as set apart from liberal or academic kinds of education.

Guidance tends to be a one-to-one activity. Progressively there is emphasis on pre-course, on-course and post-course guidance.

Many people use "teaching" and "training" synonymously, though this seems to reflect a cultural shift towards a greater valuing of the skills necessary to enhance work-based learning. So whereas cognitive and affective development were once seen as being an important end in education, the emphasis which NVQs in particular have placed on performance criteria, means that skills development, and hence "training" have taken on a more significant role.

guidance: help in what and how to learn

teaching: help in understanding and acquirement of the knowledge

training: help in acquirement of a skill

educational guidance

aims at addressing differing learning needs and guidance needs within a institution or on a trans-institutional level. Educational guidance offers a range of services: initial guidance for new-comers to orientate themselves, get an overview and get advice on levels and learning profile; occasional guidance for problems in connection with social, personal, environmental aspects of learners' work; career and progress guidance where clients can get information and advice on how to proceed, where to connect, where to head to, Guidance for exam-preparation in the form of mentoring or practical help with preparatory activities (psychological barriers, technical obstacles, resource-problems)

Many would argue that there is a radical difference between educational and vocational guidance. However both would assert the importance of "client-centredness", and since most clients would not recognise this distinction, it could equally be argued that in effect they are the same activity. In both cases there is a three stage process of:

- * Exploring the issues confronting the client*
- * Informing the client on the range of possibilities*
- * Creating an action plan to enable the client to attain his/her goal*

to help students to find their needs, to find the learning possibilities, to find the right study programme, to solve the finance problem = to make a study plan

enhancement of participation

this can either be the outspoken concept for making learning work for differing interests and target groups or a tool-kit of methods and techniques to ease access to and further promotion, progress and permeability between the different branches, areas and sectors where learning takes place. Techniques and methods deal with a broad range of aspects from costs over supply services to material-design and guidance.

Widening Participation

Before the last general election, Tony Blair announced that the new government's priorities would be "education, education, education". Low participation rates prompted the Department of Education

and Employment to commission a report from Dame Helena Kennedy QC on how to involve more people in adult education. The results of her enquiry, published under the title "Learning Works" was instrumental in the funding of local projects to encourage providers to work in partnership to develop innovative ways of delivery. In Norfolk the widening participation co-ordinator organised county-wide roadshows in towns and villages. A cartoon character "Ed the Dog" branded the project and an enquiry hot-line was established to encourage callers to ask about local courses. Other initiatives include working with voluntary organisations to widen participation, a conference on developing educational opportunities for homeless people, and the putting on of very local courses in community halls.

Promoting active participation is fundamental for popular adult education. This can be done in a number of ways. In connection with IT-supported flexible learning one model is that the folk high school or study association provide local support functions in a "study workshop" (internet access, local "guide" who can give advice concerning study methods and/or technical issues, social contacts etc) for students taking part in distance courses offered by other institutions within a "distance network". The responsibility of the course (part time studies) is on the teacher of the school/association running the course, but the students in other institutions in the network have the right to receive the necessary support to be able to take active part in the studies. This is a necessary function also to prevent drop-out from the course, which is a common feature of many forms of distance education. The organisation should provide a "study workshop" with both methodological and technical competence and a welcoming social climate. Participation in a course means that you are supposed to be an active communicator with your teacher and course mates.

evaluating techniques for learning on offer

informal evaluation through directed or open forms of reviews and feed-backs, institutionalised criteria surveys of both students and teachers/tutor; engagement of an external evaluator for focussed and detached analysis of quality in offers, teaching and learning, supply; accreditation by an external board or via an internally appointed group of specialist and/or colleagues;

All courses within Adult Education are formally evaluated at the end of the course. Students are asked to comment on the pace, content, resources and teaching methods employed and to identify both those aspects which they found particularly useful and those which they felt could be improved. The tutor then produces a summary and a course report and these are forwarded for data inputting. Examination courses tend to have an external moderator who produces a report which is forwarded to the head of service.

experiential learning

this kind of learning aims at making learning happen and take on the form of experience. Through the processing of notions, concepts, assumptions by arguing, inventing, modelling, transferring with self and others learning turns into something palpable and real. Reflecting on this helps to integrate and to judge.

Perhaps not using this terminology very frequently, Swedish popular education stresses the importance of integrating the experience of the participants to promote the learning and the group development processes. The study circle has for some one hundred years been based on the conversation between participants, where the study circle leader is a sort of "primus inter pares", the one in the group who has a special function of keeping the process going forward and keeping the discussion/activities together.

learning happens in real situations or in drama or action situations

Strategy of teaching presuming that learning based on learner's direct experience is the most effective. It involves stimulating the inner resources of the individual, making him an active part of the learning process.

facilitating ICT usage

refers to creating easily accessible systems of and for usage - that require little technical know-how as a prerequisite and adhere to the criteria of user-friendliness and simplicity; refers also to the supply with technical advice by facilitators ready to meet the learners' requests regardless of their level of competence and aptitude in technical and technology terms and issues; refers to the necessity to study problems arising from man-computer-interaction; refers to providing low-threshold learning offers for IT-literacy; refers to making more complex forms of IT-literacy an independent and an integrated part of the curriculum

ICT courses are amongst the most popular. The government has now offered the opportunity to provide 3 and 6 hour "taster courses" which are funded as long as it can be shown that there is a progression route on to a longer course. Many providers offer short courses with such titles as "Computers for the terrified" which are successful in attracting those who would not otherwise participate.

It is important to have a clear learner centred perspective also when it comes to introducing and using ICT. User-friendliness and simplicity must be in focus. This is of course especially the case when working with adults with little or no IT-experience. The choice of technical solutions is not a "neutral" technical issue, but very much a fundamental pedagogical issue. This can be shown by the Swedish example of the Popular Education Network, which was designed to be used on a broad basis within folk high schools and study associations. The choice of platform - FirstClass, a conference system - is a deliberate choice in order to have a technical platform that is

- user-friendly, easy to learn and easy to use
- based upon communication between people
- flexible and easy to adapt to local needs with a decentralised system administration
- possible to use by everybody who has Internet access, also with "slow" connections

feedback processes

feedback is another term for the purposeful interaction between learning-provider and learner on issues, tasks, assessment and support in order to reach the outcome

set. These processes comprise the careful handling of enquiries as much as the thorough and regular extensive discussion of results and products and summaries and comments on progress

This can be an important role for guidance services in identifying areas of unmet need and feeding this information back to providers. Within NAES a key role for the local area managers is to identify local need through discussions with local groups, employers and individuals. The collected information is then discussed with the relevant curriculum manager in determining the programme for the year.

Very important for the outcome of a course. One model in popular education is to make the course participants formulate their common goals of a course (it could be both subject oriented goals and other types of goals e.g. connected to personal development etc). These goals can then be discussed in different phases of the courses by the teachers and the participants and stimulate the feedback process and possible changes related to the course.

formative evaluation

is based on a clearly set out design of criteria and aims. The controlling process is meant to feed-back a soundly-based basis for future decisions

Tutors are encouraged to discuss progression with students throughout the course and frequently undertake a mid-course evaluation, particularly on longer courses.

Evaluation form that measures the learning effectiveness by assessing each step of learner's progress. Its function is to adapt and improve the further learning process to the learner's actual level of knowledge and skills.

goal orientated learning

the goal set, the standard of achievement play the dominant role in this kind of learning. The process of reaching this goal is either a matter of self-directing or tackled as a separate strand in learning. Goal-orientation in learning can also signify that is regarded as less important how things are acquired or processed as long as the goal is being reaching in one way or another

For programmes funded by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), there is funding for pre-course guidance, teaching and achievement i.e. exam success. To this extent all FEFC funded programmes are goal-orientated. The student initially signs an "individual student record" which asserts that he or she understands that the course involves working towards a qualification and it is made clear what the expectations are in relation to level and quantity of work.

to have a well defined goal and to design and plan learning programmes for the achievement of the goal

goal is set by student her/himself or it is standard

group and team work practices

in experiential learning communicating, exchanging, demonstrating, interacting is regarded as the indispensable key of learning. Other innovative approaches for learners integrate working practices and re-introduce them as methodical instruments and acquiring techniques. Learners learn how to work with resources, be the personal, professional, social or other.

In relation to the organisation of NAES, there has been a move towards employing "Curriculum Support Tutors" whose role it is to undertake teaching visits and to disseminate good practice amongst tutors. They also feedback to curriculum managers on particularly innovative and successful ways of working they come across and also on identifying the support needs of tutors.

Set of activities, exercises, actions conceived in order to teach / train a group of students / professionals. More than simple participation of every single individual, it involves establishing contacts and relationships between group members.

guidance concepts

some concepts concentrate on the idea of net-working and bundling efforts otherwise scattered and little known, many of them interested in creating synergetic efforts and effects of different providers and users; some concepts concentrate on the idea of community-based learning or project-based learning and how to train guidance workers for and in differing institutions; other concepts are more client-directed and regard a kind of counselling /coaching service for learners as part of the learning mandate of an institution or network; other guidance-concepts wish to develop more need-orientated tailor-made learning provisions.

The key concepts in guidance are the 3 principles of:

- Impartiality
- Student-centredness
- Confidentiality

The key activities are:

- Counselling
- Enabling
- Advocating
- Informing
- Referring
- Networking
- And feeding back

The first six refer to activities with the client; the last one to the process of identifying unmet need.

The Swedish national Adult Education Initiative (1996-2000) has aimed at offering studies to adults with short education. The ambition has also been to provide a learner oriented guidance. This has often been carried out through study information offices run by the municipalities where information about all kind of adult education is provided.

a clear idea, range, methodology and resources to provide guidance for well defined target groups

guidance networks

some of them have the sole aim of creating a guidance-service, trans-regional and trans-institutional; others specialise in the field and focus on specific, often marginalised, target-groups and build their guidance-activities around these specific needs and offer a network of additional services and supply for the latter.

Formal networks exist to exchange information between agency members so that they can better inform clients about provision. They also frequently discuss national developments and provide training for members.

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increasing cross-institutional co-operation

more and more institutions co operate on a temporary or permanent basis in order to bring together differing specialist knowledge, know-how and experience in order to benefit from the synergetic effect of varying resources

individual guidance

this form of guidance is aimed at finding out and assisting the individual client/learner/student to find the most appropriate path for the individual person

For an increased effectiveness of the guidance activity it is essential to corroborate the efforts of different agents acting in this field in a common activity.

This will definitely be one consequence of the internet revolution in combination with a learner centred strategy. Two national projects are at present going on in popular education. The results are very promising. One is the above mentioned Popular education distance network, where 17 partners, folk high schools and study associations, put their distance courses in a common "pot" which is then offered to the students within the network. The organisations also have to provide study support to "their" students who study distance courses run by other partners. The winners of this model are first of all the students who can have a bigger supply of (part time) courses to choose from, that the folk high schools they attend until now have not been able to offer. But it is also likely that the schools and associations who can offer these opportunities will become more attractive because of the increased possibilities for students to take part in flexible learning.

The same model is run in another project form, but here the network does not only consist of folk high schools and study associations but also other adult education partners outside popular education. This is an even more demanding model, since it is a co-operation between partners with different goals and traditions, but the winners are probably the same.

individualised learning styles and practices

this kind of learning focuses mainly or solely on designing solutions, assistance and tutoring for specific learning needs and wants - either as part of a set concept for learning in self-study modes or as part of a general course-design

A large number of typologies exist to describe learning styles. One of the most commonly used in the training of adult tutors is that based on the learning cycle.

The four types are:

- Reflective*
- Active*
- Pragmatist*
- Theorist*

and describe approaches to learning.

adapting learning methods to the specific predisposition of a learner

So far activities to adjust to various learning styles have been more talked about than actually practised. A few projects have made new attempts in this direction. One important factor that will increase the opportunities to develop modes to cope with different learning styles in flexible learning is the broad band technique, which makes it possible to work with video and sound in quite another way that the technical prerequisites of today permit. Tomorrow text based communication will have other complements and alternatives.

informal learning

is either a learning that is connected to real-life issues and therefore not necessarily looked upon as mainly a learning enterprise or any kind of learning that is undertaken in order to gain as a person without certification or any other kind of standardised assessment

learning that happens outside of institutionally organised processes

Popular education is mainly non formal learning. Informal learning has been a natural source for the non-formal study circles and folk high school courses. The awareness of informal learning is now increasing also in other parts of adult education.

information networks

institutions from different sectors and fields create a network for providing information on all partners involved

formal and informal channels to get and give information

Attempts are at present being made to establish an information network between different adult educators in Sweden. The Swedish Institute of Distance Education is a co-ordinator of these activities. The Popular Education Network is a part in this.

co-operation in informing the society and the people about an educational offer (to strengthen the efficiency of information activities)

key performance indicators (KPI for evaluation)

the set of pre-negotiated and discussed crucial elements of performance and competence a group has agreed on in order to allow standardised procedures of qualitative evaluation

Within most programmes and specifically with OCN (Open College Network) accredited programmes, providers are asked to identify both the learning outcomes and the assessment criteria. In this way students not only demonstrate their knowledge to clear criteria, but the tutor can also demonstrate how the knowledge is assessed.

Clues that can determine clearly the level of a skill acquired by someone.**key skills learning**

key-skills are transferable skills, cognitive, creative, intuitive, perceptive, that form part of any learning enterprise regardless of subject, aim and level of aptitude. These skills seem to be the essential tools for finding ways to cope with quickly changing learning tasks and challenges. Key-skills learning focuses on these skills and tries to make them an integrative part of learning in different sectors as well as a model for integrative learning as such

paying special attention to the learning of key skills (universal, most important skills to live and work in the society)

key skills are keys to manage in a changing world, they can be taught but experience is important

Concern about levels of literacy and numeracy, and the recognition that it is essential to develop IT skills has led a number of awarding bodies to develop qualification in key skills.

These include literacy, numeracy, IT and communication skills.

(The next four are covered in the text).

learner-centred frameworks

refers to the creation of settings and conditions for the learner as a client/customer where his/her needs are met and re-adapted when needs change.

thinking and acting in the educational effort oriented on the individual needs, predisposition and possibilities of each learner

learning in the community

this concept has played a decisive role in some countries where learning in the community has a long tradition in practising democracy and practising learning as a democratic chance and/or duty. This term denotes a kind of learning which is initiated by the community and carried out by the community, sometimes with the help of a paid professional, sometimes with honorary workers or with a member of the community turned tutor. This model has more and more become a guiding model for re-implanting learning into extra-mural contexts and settings.

teachers/experts guide processes in communities to solve problems together and by themselves and learn democratic ways to act

Studies in democracy aiming at changes in society or strengthening democracy have a long history in Swedish popular education. In this aspect there has been no change in popular education distance learning. A difference with other countries is that these studies are not initiated and lead by public institutions, but rather by folk high schools and study associations.

to have contacts with people permitting to interact, communicate directly (body language) and exchange information or views with others in the learning process

learning in the workplace

signifies a kind of learning that takes place on the job, either as part of the work-task or as a complementary activity. This kind of learning can either be closely related to the job, i.e. specialisation and continuing training, or it can consist of broadening one's education in more general terms. This kind of learning can either be practised in individual study or in groups and teams but also as a kind of in-service training and education

essential part of vocational education

or

education organised by employer; it happens during working hours

In the actual social and economic context characterised by rapid change and the market economy in which the competitiveness plays an important role the workers must take a permanent training at the workplace.

learning by doing things connected with the job and profiting from the learning support established in the workplace to improve general and vocational competencies

leisure time learning

goes together to some extent with informal learning, will primarily include sports and hobbies and cultural activities for fun and entertainment

profiting of any time free from other jobs for learning (usually difficult to plan and find in a rigorous schedule in professional and family life)

For a long time, this kind of studies have been organised by the study association in study circles. These circles usually develop practical skills like sewing lamp shades or painting porcelain etc. As opposed to a large part of the grade-free studies in popular education these circles do not deal with mental development. The social get-together is of great importance. Experienced and aware study circle leaders can however initiate mental learning processes in these types of hobby circles.

methods for defining target groups of learners

one can either specialise on specific groups out of necessity (competition, demand) or to cover a niche uncovered so far; one can also define target-groups in order to offer better suited services and provisions, i.e. miners who wish to re-orientate and re-qualify, young adults, unwaged single mothers, sales-persons; when there are functioning accrediting systems providers have to be very specific whom they target

The FEFC (Further Education Funding Council) has identified particular wards which they wish providers to target. Their method of doing this is to identify those wards which have very low participation rates and then to provide increased funding for providers when they successfully recruit from those wards.

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analysis of the social situation, labour market, preferences and expectations of a particular social or professional group with respect to the educational needs and demand

Folk high schools generally don't single out target groups. All people in need of learning are welcome to the folk high schools' courses irrespective of age, gender, class, etc. The determining factor is what needs each student feels herself has. The classical way is to select the persons who have the greatest need. Yet, target group definitions do still exist to some extent. A student who has relatively extensive formal education is discouraged from taking low-level courses. Persons with handicap which reduces work capacity are discouraged from full-time studies etc.

methods of guidance

there are differing methods and schools; more analytic and long-term, more pragmatic and short-term, problem-orientated ones and solution-orientated ones; systemic approaches, client-centred ones; methods more closely related to counselling, others more in the vein of coaching.

Guidance is normally undertaken on a one-to-one basis. Interviews generally are scheduled for an hour and include identifying prior experiences of education and training, the clients' aspirations and giving information about available opportunities. When people are very unsure about their sense of direction, group guidance can be beneficial. This is often a twelve hour course in which participants meet for two hours per week for six weeks.

It refers to all the specific activities that the counsellor does for enlarging client's perspective in order to help him to take a decision and to manage within a situation.

In the folk high school it's natural to use problem-orientation techniques, where the participants are often older and have short-term education, but who have long-time working experiences. It is, for reasons given below under "process pedagogy", of great importance to connect learning to the students' own experiences to make learning interesting and relevant. Problem-orientated methods walk hand-in-hand with process-thinking. Problem-orientated and process-orientated methods at a distance place large demands on the pedagogue's ability to create a virtual milieu which invites acti-

ve discourse. Working with problem-orientated and process-orientated methods in an efficient way requires repeated physical meetings.

monitoring (process and feedback)

this term can either refer to an overall recording and reflecting activity or to a prescribed procedure of assessment. In the learning process this term stands for the process-orientation in learning. The learner learns how to guide and govern his/her process through in-built monitoring sequences and practises as part of his work. The monitoring is a kind of activity by learner and tutor/teacher and helps to structure and to sequence the learner's work, breaking down the whole into units allows for supervising the whole as an evolutionary development

current verification, controlling and supervising the process of designing, preparation and implementation of an educational activity in order to have full information on how the process is carrying out with respect to the educational objectives

a form of supervision aiming to register the strengths and weaknesses of the process, what goals were reached. It's useful for improving future attempts of reaching the same goals.

Process-orientation often plays an important role in Swedish popular education studies, since tutors often work with very heterogeneous groups with large educational gaps in areas unforeseen before the start of the course. You cannot beforehand set up a study plan. In the beginning of the studies and in co operation with the students you have to reach an educational target, a flexible curriculum and a starting point. The studies are then structured through a process of interaction between the students and tutors. Since the folk high school approach to learning is closely connected to personal development, it is of the utmost importance to establish connections between the theoretical subject and the various experiences and interests of the group. The tutor must then be prepared to re-arrange the curriculum drastically to catch the interest of the group in the best possible way.

needs of guidance workers

Guidance-workers are meant to act as intermediaries in fields where learning is not necessarily appreciated or where learning is looked upon as scholarly and dusty. Guidance-workers have to be researchers in the field of needs' analysis for differing groups from employers to nursing personnel. They have to be experienced in the field of guidance and have to be able to create a confidence-basis with representatives from differing fields. They have to have some kind of specialist field knowledge, social and interactive skills and the resources for making their work work. They have to get training and support throughout their work to enable them to deliver their work

In order to ensure that they are working to common standards, guidance workers need regular meetings and training up-dates. Frequently these involve sharing case studies and being informed about new courses running, changes in legislation and developments within particular institutions. The networks can provide important sources of training. The OCN course in guidance addresses issues relating to counselling skills, networking, information, referrals and relevant national legislation.

In our country (Romania, ed.), counselling in schools is rather a new activity, that's why first of all they would need a more structured job profile. In order to make themselves known and/or listened by the principals / teachers who are still reluctant to the idea of counselling, they need well developed communication and social skills; special training sessions, in order to keep them connected with new ideas and approaches in counselling and for personal development; a strong network and a stimulating salary.

No references in Swedish popular education

needs' analysis of learning and learners' needs

When students enrol in courses they are asked about their aims, whether they need additional support in order to complete the course successfully and they sign an assessment of their learning needs. For FEFC courses there is often additional support available e.g. the employment of someone to sign for deaf students, or some additional equipment for students who may not otherwise be able to successfully complete the course.

to find out about the nature and quality of the learning process going on and in general is an essential tool in enhancing access and participation. The way in which learners process, adopt and err is an integral part of any effective learning. Analysing these ways of learning allows for inventiveness and creativity in transmitting and understanding content. The learner learns about his needs in learning and otherwise and learning becomes more directed towards connecting with the learners' way of thinking, seeing, doing.

an analysis of the changing environment and working/everyday life and analysis of individual needs

output, outcomes analysis

this is a method where outcomes (be they in learning or other fields) are not simply judged as a whole but rather split in elements or competencies demonstrated. This kind of differentiated and analytic approach aims at referring results back to the process and thus improving new attempts be they on the side of an institution, a tutor or the learner

An evaluative process focused on measuring the results of the process and also its efficiency. It supposes splitting the outputs in sub-components and taking into consideration how and in what percentage the supposed outcome was reached in order to improve new attempts.

verification of the degree of achievement of educational objectives and an analysis why the objectives were not achieved if it is the case

process evaluation

this kind of evaluation focuses on documenting the process. The process is seen as the crucial element from which one can learn how to aim at specific results

It is a holistic approach of what happened during the process. Can be a synthesis of all the analyses made before concerning process' phases, outcomes, feedback.

The way the process has developed and functioned is part of the summarised evaluation referred to below and is often conducted as a combination of a written and a group-based oral evaluation. An important part of the evaluation is done in the teachers' internal evaluatory discussions after the end of the course.

specific target group work (special needs, learning difficulties)

there is sign-languages for the deaf-community (UK) or IT-based learning for learners suffering from severe rheumatism (S) and methodological training for primary teachers (R) and for the 40+ (F) or State Fire Brigade technicians and rescuers (P)

There are specific programmes for people with learning difficulties. One of the very beneficial aspects of the OCN is that it is able to accredit programmes designed with specific target groups in mind. Hence courses on literacy, numeracy, social and life skills and other directly relevant subjects.

Distance studies can support the disabled in a variety of ways. One example is rheumatics, whose disease makes it impossible for them to take part in class-room learning because they often need an extremely long period in the morning from the time they wake up until they are able to study. They also need long periods of rest during their workday. In distance learning one can easily adjust one's studies to the limitations of one's handicap, because of the freedom from time constraints which distance learning offers.

People with special needs must be also included in the educational programme. Even if there is a tendency of integrating these target groups in normal classes, there still are specialised institutions where the teaching process is designed to respond to student's private needs of learning.

staff guidance

this stands for guidance for the recruitment of staff as well as for services for needs of staff

Action included in the category of human resources management that consists in rational usage of professional skills of the staff in an institution considering its contextual requirements as well as the individual aptitudes and preferences.

student /learner guidance

special services set up by institutions to support students/learners during their work

summative evaluation

a kind of evaluation that combines different aspects and gives an overall view

In Swedish popular education you often do this type of evaluation, since popular education first and foremost works with education defined as personal growth. Popular education seldom aims at giving

the learners special skills, as professional training does. The evaluations are constructed as follows: you ask the learners a few general questions and then you measure their subjectively experienced growth. The evaluation is a combination of a written and an oral group-based evaluation. An important part of the evaluation is done here in the teachers' internal evaluation discussion after the end of the course.

support services for learners accreditation networks

help the learner to find appropriate provisions and advise them on how to and where to make best use of the acquired credits; guarantees the learner that the standard achieved is widely acknowledged and transferable

agreement between educational organisations to keep the agreed educational standard of educational forms and validate them by an independent body; the standard has to permit the people to be recognised on the educational market

The Ministry of National Education (in Romania, ed.) is responsible for accrediting different kinds of courses, schools or universities, so that all of them respect the standard of quality. Once an institution is registered as accredited all the courses provided are recognised as valid ones.

No references in Swedish popular education

coaching

a specific support service where the coach develops a tailor-made strategy with the learner for coping with the aim set

individual work with the teacher to help the learner to understand the matter of the educational programme and to acquire it successfully

It is an activity of training and offering support, with a strong accent on practical aspects.

counselling

A social-pedagogical service to allow the learner to develop an aim and a way to meet the latter and design a general and suitable way of making this part of his/her life

help in taking decisions by proposing some variants of solutions with comments (weak and strong sides, limits, preferences etc.)

Set of activities with a specific purpose to help the person in need to know oneself better, to manage with all inner or outer difficulties regarding professional or personal life.

guidance

a kind of service that covers the general range of advice and information and combines them with a very personal and specific counselling for the client/learner

The role of the counsellor is to give good and general study-guidance to each individual learner both regarding the direction of their studies, proceeding from the learner's interests and talents, and to specific courses which the student can apply for, where they are offered, and to financing.

help in taking decisions or finding solutions or providing learning process by showing possible scenarios of steps to undertake with comments (weak and strong sides, limits, preferences etc.)

information

the collocation and scanning of material and institutions in the context of learning for a broad range of learners' and institutional interests

to give information important to the choice of an educational activity and to the learning process

mentoring

a senior student /semi-professional or professional who shares his know-how with the less experienced learner and advises him/her on a continuous and mostly honorary basis

Local mentoring is perhaps the most important function for the local mentor in popular education distance courses. The mentor must be an experienced and competent distance study ex-student. He/she must be socially apt and must be able to feel empathy.

Offering support to someone who trusts mentor's ideas, beliefs, values or knowledge. It's a kind of privileged relationship for the trainee usually chooses his mentor.

resource supply

a centre or place, trans-institutional, out-sourced or within an institution where learners and tutors are helped with the material-and media-side of information and knowledge and assisted by specialists in this very field

organisational and technical assistance of a learner (learning space, educational materials, equipment etc.)

time- and place-independent learning offers

any kind of learning that allows the learner to study where and when he chooses to

Packages of computer-assisted learning applications or online Internet applications offered by an educational institution.

Flexible learning can function in various ways. Either the courses receive applicants continually, i.e. the learner may start whenever he/she feels like it, study at his/her own pace, and finish when he/she wants to; or a number of associations offer a larger number of courses together, with connected groups of students in a network where courses start at different times during the year. The drawback with the first mode is that you have to accept a curriculum based on self-studies.

training of guidance-workers

a systematic professional training for guidance-workers from and for different sectors and walks in life

First step in becoming a guidance worker is having high-educational studies. Secondly, there are special training programmes for updating the knowledge, developing skills. During these courses, the accent is placed mainly on practical issues.

tutoring support

a person appointed as the addressee for the learner: he/she is the professional partner whom he can turn to for feed-back and when he needs psychological-didactical help, with whom he develops his/her work-plan, checks and reflects the latter, who he sends the assignments to and who corrects and corrects and comes back to them, who helps to prepare for exams or for set tasks in any kind of uncertificated learning

Guidance by a local mentor. This role is tightly limited since popular education works actively at a distance with discourse between tutor and learner and between learners. The local mentor becomes more of a person who gives general pedagogical support and who in the starting-up phase gives technical support. In distance courses with a stronger self-study profile, the support given by the local mentor is somewhat different. The mentor becomes more of a teacher giving didactic support, guiding the learner where to seek knowledge; and examining and evaluating the learner's knowledge. This type of mentoring/guidance is, for reasons mentioned above, alien to popular education.

In self study, you get support how to organise your studies, you get the tasks, support to do the tasks and feedback

uncertificated learning

any kind of learning which is done for its own sake and does not lead towards a certificate or exam

Studies without grades are in Sweden closely connected to the study circle and popular high school as the main fora. The studies are aiming at personal growth or competence development where grades are considered too limiting.

informal learning when the learning process and the learning outcomes are not confirmed by an authorised body

vocational guidance

a kind of guidance closely affiliated to business- and labour-market needs focussing on vocational qualifications and re-training or further vocational training

It is a continuous process of assisting pupils, students and then adults to find their own professional route. It starts with good self-acquaintance (aptitudes, interests, motivation...), aptitudes in searching and using all kind of information, a realistic balance between internal tendencies or wishes and all the external possibilities and it finishes with the client having a decision about the next steps to follow and to do.

guidance concerning vocational affairs (choice of a profession, choice of a job, professional development, career plan etc.)

vocational learning

any kind of learning in the context of qualification and re-qualification for specific jobs and job-descriptions

learning that adds to your qualifications in working life, in close connection to your profession

Vocational learning has a specific aim: to offer specific skills needed to manage a certain well-defined job. It is strongly controlled and clearly defined.

7. PARTNERS' PROFILE

ROMANIA

Name of institution: **Institute for educational sciences**

Your name: Mihai Jigau

Describe your role in the institution:

Head of department: Educational and Vocational Guidance

Coordinator of: National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance

❖ Describe briefly the main emphasis of your institution:

The Institute for Educational Sciences is researching in the educational domain and it is subordinated to the National Education Ministry. The main focus of the research: evaluation of the education system, curriculum, management in education, vocational training, school and vocational guidance, theory of education. The institute is profoundly involved in all projects regarding education reform in Romania.

❖ What is the focus of your main activities?

(research, guidance, advice, courses, development of (learning) material, organisation + structural planning, services,...)

Research - action in the education domain, guidance and counselling, training courses for teachers, curriculum design, design of didactical guides and support materials for teachers and students.

❖ What would you call the main concern of this work?

Rather low funding for projects, difficult implementation of research results, resistance of teachers to change, insufficient number of researchers for research projects/programmes.

❖ What would you like to emphasise in your activities in the future?

Educational and vocational guidance for disadvantaged people; IT-system for vocational counselling, education in rural areas.

❖ Is your institution part of other departments / institutions?

If yes, what are the subject areas of the other parts and how do you connect with them?

The Institute is funded by the National Education Ministry - which is the main beneficiary of the results of the research and of the products elaborated. The Institute's academic procedures (acade-

mic positions of the staff, position and promoting system) are fully consistent with the organising system of research patronaged by the Romanian Academy.

- ❖ How could you describe the history of your institution (time of origin as well as goals and objectives,...)

The Institute for Educational Sciences was re-established in 1990 (following the 1998 revolution). It was initially established in 1954 as the Institute for Pedagogical Studies, then its name was changed into the Institute for Pedagogical and Psychological Research. In 1982 the Institute was dissolved out of political reasons. All along its existence, the Institute has performed research and training activities - the latter targeted at educational staff on pre-university level.

- ❖ How does your institution fit into the framework of institutions and activities in the field of adult education work?

The Institute has its own projects regarding adult education: research, comparative studies, intervention projects. A specific adult education department existed once within the Institute.

- ❖ Do you have short-term or long-term network-co-operations with similar or supplementary organisations?

The Institute co-operates with various other institutions, universities and organisations that develop adult education activities through common projects, information exchange, training activities.

- ❖ Does your institution operate mainly on a regional / national / international level?

(mainly with international partners or rather with regional/national partners or mainly autonomous)

The Institute, through its researchers, is partner in some international adult education projects funded by the Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci programmes.

- ❖ Do you have experiences with project-work? And: what are your experiences in the field of trans-national projects? (effects on your everyday activities, establishing of long-term co-operation,...)

Funding of the Institute is achieved on the basis of research projects proposed by the Institute and/or various departments of the National Education Ministry and endorsed by the Ministry. Along with a group of colleagues I applied (and Leonardo da Vinci funding was approved) for a project regarding School and vocational guidance of pupils in disadvantaged areas (the Institute as coordinator, partners from France, Belgium and Hungary). Meanwhile, the Institute is a partner in other projects initiated by organisations and institutions in the European Union.

- ❖ How many employees work in your institution?

96

a) full-time

81

b) freelance / part-time

15

- c) voluntary workers
- d) The Institute also works with external experts in some projects.

- ❖ How many of these employees do professional work and how many clerical and administrative work? Give some figures on the relationship.

The staff of the Institute is made up of 68 researchers - experts in psychology, pedagogy, sociology, philosophy, mathematics, history, economy, Romanian and foreign languages, physics, biology, geography and others. The administrative staff accounts for the rest of 28 persons (building manager, support personnel, computer support staff without university studies, librarian, secretary, accountants, guards, cleaning staff).

- ❖ Is your organisation a profit or non-profit organisation?

The Institute of Educational Sciences is a non-profit organisation.

- ❖ Is your organisation private / mixed / or a public institution?

The Institute of Educational Sciences is a public institution.

- ❖ Is it financed by (you can tick more than one)

- a) **public funds** (subsidies, EU-co-financing ...)
- b) income / invoices for the provided services/offers...
- c) sponsoring, membership-fees...
- c) others:.....

SLOVAK REPUBLIC

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Name of institution: **National Centre of Distance Education (NCDE)**

Your name: Miroslav Babinský

Describe your role in the institution:

Head/director of NCDE

❖ Describe briefly the main emphasis of your institution:

NCDE is the managing and information providing body responsible for promoting of post secondary - continuing education with priority in open and distance forms of education in the Slovak Republic.

❖ What is the focus of your main activities?

(research, guidance, advice, courses , development of (learning) material, organisation + structural planning, services,...)

Project work, guidance and advice mainly in ODL, promoting ODL in SR by means of conferences, seminars, articles, information leaflets, etc., networking activities, e.g. organise a network of institutes providing DE, networking with other international institutes providing ODL.

❖ What would you call the main concern of this work?

Working on various projects, networking activities, promotion of ODL

❖ What would you like to emphasise in your activities in the future?

Project work on national and international level within EU programmes like Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, 5th framework and others, and networking activities on both levels, national and international.

❖ Is your institution part of other departments / institutions?

If yes, what are the subject areas of the other parts and how do you connect with them?

No.

❖ How could you describe the history of your institution (time of origin as well as goals and objectives,...)

NCDE at the Slovak University of Technology (SUT) in Bratislava was established by an order of the Minister of Education of the SR on 18th of Nov. 1994 (establishing document was issued on Nov. 30, 1994). The Rector of SUT set up NCDE in December 1994. Academic senate of SUT conceded legal independence by a decree which took effect in June 1995. NCDE was the National Contact Point (NCP) in the international PHARE project "Multi-country Co-operation

in Distance Education" and organised a network of institutes providing distance education in Slovakia in 1996. During 1995-1997 first courses were developed and delivered. Up to September 1999 2403 adults took part in it. Now the course number was enlarged to 30 and the first full degree (diploma) course started.

- ❖ How does your institution fit into the framework of institutions and activities in the field of adult education work?

NCDE is managing and promoting activities of post-secondary continuing (life-long) education with priority in ODL forms of education. All activities are aimed at adults and are prepared and organised in close co-operation with universities and other accredited adult educational institutions. NCDE is an active member of the Association of Adult education in SR. In 1999 NCDE designed, promoted and sponsored for example the preparation of the first list of institutions and courses for adults in SR.

- ❖ Do you have short-term or long-term network-co-operations with similar or supplementary organisations?

In September 1996 the Slovak Network of Distance Education (SNDE) was created as a community of organisations for support and provision of distance and life-long education in the Slovak Republic. The SNDE consists of the National Centre of DE, Local Centres of DE and the Methodical Centre of DE. The SNDE allows everybody who is interested a flexible access to university and other accredited educational institutions.

NCDE became a member of the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU) in March 1998 with observer status and is a member of the Association of Institutions of Adult Education in SR.

- ❖ Does your institution operate mainly on a regional / national / international level?

(mainly with international partners or rather with regional/national partners or mainly autonomous)

NCDE operates both on national and international level, both with international and national partners.

- ❖ Do you have experiences with project-work? And: what are your experiences in the field of transnational projects? (effects on your everyday activities, establishing of long-term co-operations,...)

Yes, we have. NCDE managed and co-ordinated the international PHARE project "Multi-country Co-operation in Distance Education" in which beside Slovakia 10 other Central and Eastern European countries participated. NCDE has participated and is participating in other transnational projects. NCDE has established (and is establishing) many long-term co-operations. Project work has broadened our knowledge, skills, views and experience for everyday activities.

- ❖ How many employees work in your institution?

a) full-time

4

b) freelance / part-time

5 (full-time equivalent)

c) voluntary workers

1

d)

❖ How many of these employees do professional work and how many clerical and administrative work? Give some figures on the relationship.

One of them is accountant and 3 others are doing professional work.

❖ Is your organisation a profit or non-profit organisation?

NCDE is a non-profit organisation.

❖ Is your organisation private / mixed / or a public institution?

NCDE is a public institution.

❖ Is it financed by (you can tick more than one)

a) **public hand** (subsidies, EU-co-financing ...)

b) income / invoices for the provided services/offers...

c) sponsoring, membership-fees...

c) others:.....

Name of institution:

**Polskie stowarzyszenie edukacji ustawicznej
Inżynierów i menedżerów - "EDUSTIM"
Polish association for continuing engineering education - PACEE**

Your name:

Roman Nagorski

Describe your role in the institution:

President of The Board. Management and co-ordination of EDUSTIM's activities.
Development of new areas of activity and management of selected projects.

❖ Describe briefly the main emphasis of your institution:

The EDUSTIM promotes, develops and implements continuing education as one of the most effective ways of developing wide-range competencies of modern engineers and managers (and other professionals). For this aim new methodologies and technologies of training and learning are of special interest.

❖ What is the focus of your main activities?

Initiation and co-ordination of activities aiming at the achievement of EDUSTIM's objectives.

❖ What would you call the main concern of this work?

Contribution to the creation of a good environment (legal, institutional, structural, mental and methodological) for the development of modern Adult Education and Continuing Education at the national level, in companies and organisations and for individual professionals (especially engineers and managers).

❖ What would you like to emphasise in your activities in the future?

Development of co-operation networks as the best method of involving people and organisations to achieve the EDUSTIM's objectives.

❖ Is your institution part of other departments / institutions?

No, the EDUSTIM is an independent non-government organisation.

❖ How could you describe the history of your institution (time of origin as well as goals and objectives,...)

The Association "EDUSTIM" was founded on June 20, 1997. The Association was registered according to the Polish law on October 9, 1997. The group of founding members consists of representatives of various circles from different regions in Poland : higher schools, training organisations

and employers. That is the current profile of the members.

The goal of the Association is to disseminate and develop Continuing Engineering Education (CEE) in close connection with the needs of the changing and developing Polish market economy and requirements of the democratic organisation of the Polish State and society, with direct reference to the standards and experiences of the World and the European Union in particular in the area of continuing education and adult education.

The objectives of the Association include in particular:

- * initiation, organisation and carrying out of studies and development projects,*
- * initiation and creation of networks and co-operation links with various national and foreign bodies,*
- * providing of information activity,*
- * publishing of papers, reports and guides, also using electronic media,*
- * creation and distribution of data bases and data banks, also using computer techniques,*
- * organisation of seminars, conferences and congresses as well as participation in such events organised by other bodies,*
- * organisation and provision of lectures, workshops, seminars, courses and other forms of continuing education, including the flexible and distance education ones,*
- * elaboration, implementation and dissemination of innovative organisational and methodological ideas,*
- * elaboration, implementation, promotion and dissemination of quality standards,*
- * accreditation of continuing education forms and centres to quality standards,*
- * organisational and financial support of undertakings in the area of CEE.*

- ❖ How does your institution fit into the framework of institutions and activities in the field of adult education work?

The Association aims at helping:

- * individuals - to plan and provide their professional development and career path,*
- * companies and institutions - to define their educational needs, training and professional development plans, and then to put them into practice effectively, in close connection with the development strategy and human resources policy including also requirements of global market and economy*
- * institutions and centres for continuing education - to create a co-operation network supporting, in a qualitative and organisational manner, their educational and training potential,*
- * the State and its institutions - to design and put into practice the educational policy and motivating and developing mechanisms of continuing education*
- * the world and the European institutions, organisations and centres - to co-operate effectively with Polish bodies taking into account national specificity.*

- ❖ Do you have short-term or long-term network-co-operations with similar or supplementary organisations?

Building networks for co-operation with other organisations and individual experts is the strategic way of EDUSTIM's activity. However, it signifies a creation of data banks of contacts and links (not the establishment of formal and structural partnerships) permitting to create working teams for concrete common undertakings.

- ❖ Does your institution operate mainly on a regional / national / international level?
(mainly with international partners or rather with regional/national partners or mainly autonomous).

EDUSTIM operates on all levels depending on the character of undertakings carried out or planned: from international projects, through national conferences to seminars delivered for one company or community, small group or an individual.

- ❖ Do you have experiences with project-work? And: what are your experiences in the field of trans-national projects? (effects on your everyday activities, establishing of long-term co-operations,...)

I personally have quite a big experience with participation in multi-partner projects and co-ordination of trans-national projects in particular (within TEMPUS, TESSA, LEONARDO programmes). The EDUSTIM is, in a significant way, the effect of these projects, as well as other training private company IKKU, which I preside at present. However, both are acting as a kind of "virtual organisations" based on co-operative nets with many experts and organisations.

- ❖ How many employees work in your institution?

The EDUSTIM is a virtual organisation. The number of people involved in its activities is quite large. But the numbers of "typical" or "calculated" employees do not signify anything. For each activity, a team of experts, organisational partners and "ad hoc" assistant collaborators or subcontractors is created. Some of them are "almost permanent" and some "occasional".

- ❖ Is your organisation a profit or non-profit organisation?

The EDUSTIM is a non-profit organisation. Besides, carrying out the statutory association's affairs and a part of activities are voluntary tasks of its members.

- ❖ Is your organisation private / mixed / or a public institution?

The EDUSTIM is the so called "social organisation" of individuals and supporting organisations (an association according to the Polish legal regulations).

Is it financed by (you can tick more than one)

- a) **public hand** (subsidies, EU-co-financing ...)
- b) **income / invoices for the provided services/offers**
- c) sponsoring, membership-fees...: yes
- c) others : yes (financial income)

POLAND

Name of institution:

Warsaw University of Technology, Faculty of Civil Engineering, Distance Education Study Centre

Your name:

Wojciech Gilewski

Describe your role in the institution:

Sub-Dean for Education at the Faculty of Civil Engineering
Co-ordinator for programmes in the field of open/distance education

❖ Describe briefly the main emphasis of your institution:

Warsaw University of Technology is the biggest technical university in Poland, with 16 faculties covering all technical sciences. Distance Education Study Centre at the Faculty of Civil Engineering was established to promote the idea of ODL within the university and within the region.

❖ What is the focus of your main activities?

Co-ordination of activities related to modern methods of teaching and learning.

❖ What would you call the main concern of this work?

Preparation of learning materials for ODL

❖ What would you like to emphasise in your activities in the future?

DESC was specialised in the field of textbooks for ODL. At present and for the future we would like to change the subject of interest for multimedia learning materials with Internet.

❖ Is your institution part of other departments / institutions?

Yes. DESC is a part of the Faculty of Civil Engineering.

❖ How could you describe the history of your institution (time of origin as well as goals and objectives,...)

DESC was established in 1998 within the PHARE Multi-country Programme in Distance Education.

The goal of the Centre is to develop ODL, OFL within the University and within the region.

The objectives of the Centre are:

** Preparation of ODL learning materials*

** National and international co-operation in ODL/OFL*

- ❖ How does your institution fit into the framework of institutions and activities in the field of adult education work?

Warsaw University of Technology is working in the framework of Polish Universities. One of the field of interest are extramural studies, which are exactly in the area of adult education. Modern methods of learning and teaching are one of the most important factors for these kind of students.

- ❖ Do you have short-term or long-term network-co-operations with similar or supplementary organisations?

Yes. We have 3 short-term international programmes (SOCRATES) with several institutions from EU. Long-term co-operation are our traditional very well contacts with City of Bath College (UK), The Open University (UK) and Kielce University of Technology (PL).

- ❖ Does your institution operate mainly on a regional / national / international level?

(mainly with international partners or rather with regional/national partners or mainly autonomous).

We operate in a regional, national and international level.

- ❖ Do you have experiences with project-work? And: what are your experiences in the field of transnational projects? (effects on your everyday activities, establishing of long-term co-operations,...)

International programmes:

TESSA Project - 20 - 1994-1996

TESSA Project - 22 - 1994-1996

TEMPUS Project CEPROADS - 1996-1998

PHARE Multicountry Programme in Distance Education - 1998-1999

SOCRATES Project ReReal - 1998-2000

SOCRATES Project EUCEET - 1999-2000

SOCRATES Project VINE - 1999-2000

Several national programmes

- ❖ How many employees work in your institution?

At the Faculty of Civil Engineering - 250 persons.

At DESC - 4-5 persons

- ❖ Is your organisation a profit or non-profit organisation?

Non-profit

- ❖ Is your organisation private / mixed / or a public institution?

Public

- ❖ Is it financed by (you can tick more than one)

- public hand** (subsidies, EU-co-financing ...)
- income / invoices for the provided services/offers**
- sponsoring, membership-fees**
- others** (financial income)

FINLAND

Name of institution: **Rovala-Opisto (Rovala Folk High School)**

Your name: Pirjo Keinänen

Describe your role in the institution:

Planner / teacher

planning and organising adult education and projects, networking, international networking, and some teaching (social subjects)

❖ Describe briefly the main emphasis of your institution:

Adult Education Institution, which provides general and vocational education and open university studies

❖ What is the focus of your main activities?

(research, guidance, advice, courses, development of (learning) material, organisation + structural planning, services,...)

Full time studies, short courses, guidance

❖ What would you call the main concern of this work?

Planning, developing, organising

❖ What would you like to emphasise in your activities in the future?

- *to do more networking with different organisations, so that the field of informal and non-formal learning could do more co-operation, in the meaning of lifelong learning*
- *to have more and better education (and more participants) in our institution*

❖ Is your institution part of other departments / institutions?

If yes, what are the subject areas of the other parts and how do you connect with them?

We are part of the Rovala Settlement (Association), whose main sectors are:

- *liberal adult education (Rovala Folk High, Adult Education Centre of Rovaniemi)*
 - *work with elderly people*
 - *youth work*
- and the idea of settlement work (and common employer, Rovala Settlement) is connecting us*

❖ How could you describe the history of your institution (time of origin as well as goals and objectives,...)

Rovala Folk High School was founded 1954 (Rovala Settlement was founded 1923) to offer liberal education in the spirit of the settlement (a bridge from person to person - originally a bridge between working class and church after the civil war) in Lapland to people who didn't have the possibility to go for vocational or university studies to southern Finland, it was a kind of "poor man's university", very appreciated.

- ❖ How does your institution fit into the framework of institutions and activities in the field of adult education work?

Folk High Schools are an essential part of liberal adult education, and liberal adult education is part of adult education, defined by law.

- ❖ Do you have short-term or long-term network-cooperations with similar or supplementary organisations?

- *everyday network with Rovaniemi Adult Education Centre*
- *"immigrant work" - network with the Finnish Federation of Settlements*
- *"Virtual folk high school", a project of the Finnish Folk High School Association (for all folk high schools)*
- *"Quality- project" together with several folk high schools*
- *common study modules with two folk high schools in northern Finland*
- *co-operation with Swedish folk high schools*

- ❖ Does your institution operate mainly on a regional / national / international level?

(mainly with international partners or rather with regional/national partners or mainly autonomous)

regional

mainly autonomous

- ❖ Do you have experiences with project-work? And: what are your experiences in the field of transnational projects? (effects on your everyday activities, establishing of long-term cooperations,...)

We have some experiences with national projects. Re-real is our first "real" transnational project. Transnational communication has become normal, contacts easier, and we hope that project work in future will continue as cooperations.

- ❖ How many employees work in your institution?

17

a) full-time

17

b) freelance / part-time

about 50

c) voluntary workers

d)

- ❖ How many of these employees do professional work and how many clerical and administrative work? Give some figures on the relationship.

10 teachers

2 clerical and administrative workers

5 kitchen, cleaning, buildings workers

- ❖ Is your organisation a profit or non-profit organisation?

Non-profit

- ❖ Is your organisation private / mixed / or a public institution?

NGO (non governmental organisation), private

- ❖ Is it financed by (you can tick more than one)

a) **public hand** (subsidies, EU-co-financing ...) (**about 45 %**)

b) **income / invoices for the provided services/offers**

c) sponsoring, membership-fees...

c) others:....**student fees**

Name of institution: **The Swedish National Council of Adult Education (Folkbildningsrådet)**

Your name: Björn Garefelt

Describe your role in the institution:

National project leader for pedagogical projects in Folk High Schools and Study Associations using IT support

❖ Describe briefly the main emphasis of your institution:

The Council distributes grants to Study Associations and Folk High Schools, hands in basic data for budgeting and annual financial report to the government, and also follows up and evaluates the activities within popular education organisations. These tasks are entrusted to the Council by the Government and Parliament. The Council also covers popular education policies and co-ordinates international contacts for its members.

❖ What is the focus of your main activities? What would you call the main concern of this work?

For IT supported activities:

Developing strategies, creating preconditions for and spreading of experiences of popular education activities supported by IT.

Creating better opportunities for the Folk High Schools and the Study Associations to use IT support as an integrated part of their activities.

❖ What would you like to emphasise in your activities in the future?

A strategic analysis for IT supported activities in popular education both on a national and local/regional level, dealing with questions of access, availability, democracy and life long learning.

❖ Is your institution part of other departments/institutions? If yes, what are the subject areas of the other parts and how do you connect with them?

The council is a non-profit organisation with three members: The National Federation of Study Associations, The Federation of County Councils and The Interest Organisation for Popular Folk High Schools (RIO). The members have representatives in various bodies, for example the IT strategic committee of the Council.

❖ How could you describe the history of your institution (time of origin as well as goals and objectives...)?

The Council of Adult Education was founded in 1991 as a non-profit organisation, but with specific state tasks entrusted by the government. The council's main function is to apply for and distribute state grants and to follow up and evaluate the various activities within the "folkbildning". The council is at present also national co-ordinator of a project initiative where IT is used for pedagogical purposes within popular education (1999-2001).

- ❖ How does your institution fit into the framework of institutions and activities in the field of adult education work?

It is the "umbrella organisation" for Swedish "folkbildning".

- ❖ Do you have short-term or long-term network-cooperations with similar or supplementary organisations?

On an international level The Swedish National Council of Adult Education is a member of EAEA (The European Association for the Education of Adults). The Council also takes active part in the activities of the Nordic Folk High School Council (within the Nordic Council of Ministers)

- ❖ Does your institution operate mainly on a regional / national / international level?

(mainly with international partners or rather with regional/national partners or mainly autonomous)

Mainly on a national level, but also with international contacts concerning adult education.

- ❖ Do you have experiences with project-work? And: what are your experiences in the field of transnational projects? (effects on your everyday activities, establishing of long-term cooperations,...)

The Council has project work experience both from national and transnational projects. Being an umbrella organisation the bulk of operational project activities are done within the member organisations and not directly by the Council itself. The Council concentrates on matters of policy and politics in the international work and other aspects of common interest for the members.

- ❖ How many employees work in your institution?

a) full-time

16

b) freelance / part-time

3

c) voluntary workers

d)

- ❖ How many of these employees do professional work and how many clerical and administrative work? Give some figures on the relationship.

About 75% professional, 25% clerical/administrative

- ❖ Is your organisation a profit or non-profit organisation?

A non-profit organisation

❖ Is your organisation private / mixed / or a public institution?

*Formally the organisation is a non-profit organisation with three member organisations.
The organisation however also perform tasks given to the organisation by the government,
like distributing state subsidies, evaluation etc.*

❖ Is it financed by (you can tick more than one)

- a) **public hand** (subsidies, EU-co-financing ...)
- b) income / invoices for the provided services/offers...
- c) **sponsoring, membership-fees**
- c) others:.....

AUSTRIA

Name of institution: **Burgenländische Forschungsgesellschaft
Research society Burgenland**

Your name:
Alfred Lang

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Describe your role in the institution:

Manager

❖ Describe briefly the main emphasis of your institution:

To initiate and deliver research and educational programmes from various humanist branches has been and still is the main area of the society's work. Most of the research work being done in centres is on regional issues and topics. The Research Society is also a decisive factor within the educational landscape of the region when it comes to the dissemination and delivery of its work.

❖ What is the focus of your main activities?

(research, guidance, advice, courses, development of (learning) material, organisation + structural planning, services,...)

- Platform for delivery of research projects and educational projects
- To organise and deliver symposia, conferences, and panel discussions
- Editing of various publications
- Contact point for Austrian scientists and students

❖ What would you call the main concern of this work?

research projects and educational projects

❖ What would you like to emphasize in your activities in the future?

Educational projects and symposia

❖ Is your institution part of other departments / institutions?

If yes, what are the subject areas of the other parts and how do you connect with them?

No

❖ How could you describe the history of your institution (time of origin as well as goals and objectives,...)

The „Social Research Society Burgenland" was founded in July 1987 (renamed into: "Research Society Burgenland" in 1989) aiming mainly at furthering the development of science and research in the region and establishing an appropriate environment for scientific work. Thus the institution

set up was to be a platform as well as a resource and information centre for research plans in the humanities, particularly social sciences, cultural studies and adult education.

The thematic orientation of the Research Society Burgenland encompasses historical questions, regional features of social and cultural development as well as matters of regional impact, particularly in connection with the border position of the Burgenland and in connection with the living conditions of the native minorities: the Croats, the Hungarians and the Romanes.

❖ How does your institution fit into the framework of institutions and activities in the field of adult education work?

The Research Society Burgenland should works as a panel for discussing Burgenland-related topics summoning people from various areas in adult education, culture, and science.

The research activity is to focus on regional issues. The transfer of the findings into the region is an integral part of the scientific task as the implementation of the respective outcomes.

❖ Do you have short-term or long-term network-co operations with similar or supplementary organisations?

Yes

❖ Does your institution operate mainly on a regional / national / international level?

(mainly with international partners or rather with regional/national partners or mainly autonomous)

The Research Society Burgenland mainly operates on a regional level with regional partners.

❖ Do you have experiences with project-work? And: what are your experiences in the field of transnational projects? (effects on your everyday activities, establishing of long-term co-operations,...)

Yes (on the national and international level).

Experiences and effects:

- International Contact

- Creating "new business" in the field of adult education

- Multilingualism

❖ How many employees work in your institution?

6 Persons

a) full-time:

1

b) freelance / part-time:

5

c) voluntary workers:

4-6

d) others

- ❖ How many of these employees do professional work and how many clerical and administrative work? Give some figures on the relationship.

All colleagues are doing scientific work.

- ❖ Is your organisation a profit or non-profit organisation?

Non-profit

- ❖ Is your organisation private / mixed / or a public institution?

Private Institution

- ❖ Is it financed by (you can tick more than one)
 - public hand** (subsidies, EU-co-financing ...)
 - income / invoices for the provided services/offers...
 - sponsoring, membership-fees...**
 - others:.....

Name of institution: **Federal Department for Adult Education in the Burgenland**

Your name: Grete Wallmann

Describe your role in the institution:

Manager of service agency

❖ Describe briefly the main emphasis of your institution:

Furthering of Adult Education and of the public library service, aiming at the equality of chances in the access to continuing education and information for the population.

❖ What is the focus of your main activities?

(research, guidance, advice, courses, development of (learning) material, organisation + structural planning, services,...)

Information and guidance concerning institutions of AE and library service. Initiation, conception and co ordination of co operative projects.

Educational and continuing education measures for co-workers in Adult Education supporting the structural infrastructure for continuing education (decentralisation).

❖ What would you call the main concern of this work?

Initiative towards establishing a trans-regional information system about education in the Internet and towards a regional and national network for educational guidance workers.

❖ What would you like to emphasise in your activities in the future?

More professionalism among the co-workers in AE, the development of quality criteria and the ensuring of quality, aiming at the mutual acceptance of continuing education modules.

Supporting access to new learning forms, e.g. by developing a platform for open and flexible learning.

❖ Is your institution part of other departments / institutions?

If yes, what are the subject areas of the other parts and how do you connect with them?

Our institution is subordinate to the Federal Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

❖ How could you describe the history of your institution (time of origin as well as goals and objectives,...)

The supporting agency in its present form was established in 1973 on the basis of a federal law for the support of adult education. Tasks are "information and guidance of persons and institutions in the area of adult education and library service, especially in organisational, professional and methodological respects." We initiate and support co-operative measures for improving the infrastructure and for professionalism in educational activity. Public relation work and the heightening of awareness for continuing education is an essential task.

- ❖ How does your institution fit into the framework of institutions and activities in the field of adult education work?

On one hand the agency is a service institution of the federal agency, on the other hand it's a service and contact point for adult education issues in the county. It has a very important mediating and co-ordinating function between federal agency and county as well as between institutions of adult education and the Ministry.

- ❖ Do you have short-term or long-term network-cooperations with similar or supplementary organisations?

The majority of the co operative projects is meant for several years, they are supposed to become a permanent structure, respectively: for instance trans-institutional educational guidance, training and continuing education of co-workers, regional centres.

- ❖ Does your institution operate mainly on a regional / national / international level?

(mainly with international partners or rather with regional/national partners or mainly autonomous)

Mainly regional, but also national and international.

- ❖ Do you have experiences with project-work? And: what are your experiences in the field of transnational projects? (effects on your everyday activities, establishing of long-term cooperations,...)

I have a lot of experience with project work. My first experience in a trans- national project was REREAL. I have acquired a new perspective of my work, I have aimed my work at a new direction, so to say, towards open accesses to learning. Maybe we will succeed to develop a project in the near future which can assemble the numerous approaches as a whole.

- ❖ How many employees work in your institution?

9

a) full-time

5

b) freelance / part-time

4

c) voluntary workers

d)

- ❖ How many of these employees do professional work and how many clerical and administrative work? Give some figures on the relationship.

3 : 6

- ❖ Is your organisation a profit or non-profit organisation?

Non-profit.

- ❖ Is your organisation private / mixed / or a public institution?

Public institution.

- ❖ Is it financed by (you can tick more than one)

- a) **public hand** (subsidies, EU-co-financing ...)
- b) income / invoices for the provided services/offers...
- c) sponsoring, membership-fees...
- c) others:.....

AUSTRIA

Name of institution: **Verband der oberösterreichischen Volkshochschulen**

Your name: Paul Kaspar-Hilber

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Describe your role in the institution:

The official marking is pedagogical employer

❖ Describe briefly the main emphasis of your institution:

- *Public relations work for the Upper Austrian folk high schools*
- *Course leaders - Continuing education*
Organisation, preparation and implementation of continuing education functions for course leaders in the framework of the BILDUNGSFORUM (forum of education) of the Austrian association
Carrying out seminars of the Association of Austrian Folk High Schools
- *Support of the folk high schools in the implementation of projects*
- *Implementation of own projects*
Sprachenverbund (language association)
- *Service agency for the folk high schools to carry out the regular programme*
- *Consultant agency, conveying of information (publishing of circulars)*
- *Conferences for directors of folk high schools to ensure the quality*
- *Address administration*
- *Co-ordination/Editing at "Kopfstand Neu"*
(mouthpiece of Upper Austrian Adult Education forums, published 8 times a year in a newspaper)
- *Internal*
 - o *Internal honours*
 - o *Statistic report of performance*
 - o *Turntable for information*
- *Distribution and balancing of subsidies*
- *Contacts to other institutions*

- *Federal association, other AE institutions*
- *Representation of the Upper Austrian folk high schools at functions and in committees*

❖ What is the focus of your main activities?
(research, guidance, advice, courses, development of (learning) material, organisation + structural planning, services,...)

- *Internal continuing education of co-workers*
- *Project work*

❖ What would you like to emphasise in your activities in the future?

In autumn 2000 there will be a change at the top of the association; it is therefore impossible to give a prognosis for the future.

❖ Is your institution part of other departments / institutions?

No

❖ How could you describe the history of your institution (time of origin as well as goals and objectives,...)

Foundation of the "Verband der Volkshochschulen im österreichischen Bildungswerk" (Association of folk high schools in Austrian education work) in 1953. Main focus of work was then on the bigger cities - Linz, Wels and Steyr.

The 10 folk high schools of 1953 in that region gradually developed into the 130 folk high schools of today, with all their branches and extensions. The reason for this development was the joining together with the Chamber of Workers in 1963. Since 1973 educational programmes have been offered in all districts of Upper Austria by the folk high schools. In 1973 the association also went through structural changes and changed its name into "Association of the Upper Austrian folk high schools".

About 2000 courses and 1500 functions were organised in 1967, whereas in 1999 as much as 82.000 learners participated in 6680 courses. The association views itself as a service agency for the other folk high school members and has offered training seminars for years, regularly and free of charge. The course programme also includes about 30 continuing education seminars (Internet for language teachers, communication training, creativity workshops etc.).

❖ How does your institution fit into the framework of institutions and activities in the field of adult education work?

On one hand we train the colleagues, on the other we support the other folk high school members as an association.

❖ Do you have short-term or long-term network-co operations with similar or supplementary organisations?

No

❖ Does your institution operate mainly on a regional / national / international level?

(mainly with international partners or rather with regional/national partners or mainly autonomous)

Our partners are mainly on the regional and national level.

- ❖ Do you have experiences with project-work? And: what are your experiences in the field of transnational projects? (effects on your everyday activities, establishing of long-term co operations,...)

Presently a big project is in preparation (project leader Paul Kaspar), "Sprachenverbund" - co-operation of all folk high schools in Upper Austria, start probably autumn 2001.

I don't have so much experience on the transnational level, but the "Sprachenverbund" will be an international project.

- ❖ How many employees work in your institution?.....

3 persons

a) full-time.....1 person..

b) freelance / part-time..1 person..(20 Std), secretary.

c) voluntary workers 1 person, manager

- ❖ How many of these employees do professional work and how many clerical and administrative work? Give some figures on the relationship.

1 person (40 hrs)

1 person (20 hrs), secretary

- ❖ Is your organisation a profit or non-profit organisation?

Non Profit Organisation

- ❖ Is your organisation private / mixed / or a public institution?

Public institution

- ❖ Is it financed by

public hand (subsidies, EU-co-financing ...)

Name of institution: **Lernfeld Sprache**

Your name: Gitta Stagl

Describe your role in the institution:

Head of Lernfeld Sprache

❖ Describe briefly the main emphasis of your institution:

Resource supplier, workshop provider, material design and research

❖ What is the focus of your main activities?

(research, guidance, advice, courses, development of (learning) material, organisation + structural planning, services,...)

Bringing together science - research - education in the field of learning and handling language / knowledge

❖ What would you call the main concern of this work?

Conceptualising, co-ordinating, designing, deploying

❖ What would you like to emphasise in your activities in the future?

Do more research in the field of language and cognitive sensual access ways

❖ Is your institution part of other departments / institutions?

If yes, what are the subject areas of the other parts and how do you connect with them?

No

❖ How could you describe the history of your institution (time of origin as well as goals and objectives,...)

Lernfeld Sprache has been active in the field of editing and producing material for over 10 years, recent project work can be dated back to 1996.

❖ How does your institution fit into the framework of institutions and activities in the field of adult education work?

Lernfeld Sprache is a kind of knowledge and know-how centre in the field of adult language learning and learning through language - it offers resources, professional expertise and consultancy for adult education providers of all sectors.

- ❖ Do you have short-term or long-term network-cooperations with similar or supplementary organisations?

With a couple of adult education institutions on a transregional level.

Transnational co-operations with University partners in UK and the Netherlands.

Transnational projects with a range of partners in Sweden and England.

Interregional co-operations with neighbouring countries.

Transregional co-operations with SMEs.

- ❖ Does your institution operate mainly on a regional / national / international level?

(mainly with international partners or rather with regional/national partners or mainly autonomous)

National and international level

- ❖ Do you have experiences with project-work? And: what are your experiences in the field of transnational projects? (effects on your everyday activities, establishing of long-term co-operations,...)

Yes, we do and once one is willing to climb obstacles which turn out to be more productive than "smooth" ways, it seems to be a hard but nevertheless rewarding work.

- ❖ How many employees work in your institution?.....

a) full-time

5

b) freelance / part-time

2

c) voluntary workers

d)

- ❖ How many of these employees do professional work and how many clerical and administrative work? Give some figures on the relationship.

5 professional work and co-ordinative work

2 clerical and administrative work

- ❖ Is your organisation a profit or non-profit organisation?

Non-profit organisation



❖ Is your organisation private / mixed / or a public institution?

Non governmental organisation, private

❖ Is it financed by (you can tick more than one)

- a) **public hand** (subsidies, EU-co-financing ...)
- b) **income / invoices for the provided services/offers...**
- c) sponsoring, membership-fees...
- c) others:.....

ITALY

Name of institution: **Ufficio Educazione permanente,
biblioteche e audiovisivi**

Your name: Lucia Piva

Describe your role in the institution:

Director of the office , which means responsible for the achievement of the annual objectives in the field of competence mentioned below, for the budget given in order to reach these aims and for the co-ordination of the personnel.

❖ Describe briefly the main emphasis of your institution:

- *Co-ordination and technical advice in the sector of adult education and libraries;*
- *Planning and realisation of projects;*
- *Formation and development in the sector of adult education and libraries;*
- *Contributes to the institution and the running of libraries and to activities and infrastructures in the sector of adult education;*
- *Realisation, purchase and distribution of publications of local interest;*
- *Promotion of reading;*
- *Culture and recording of audio-visual material;*
- *Pedagogy, technology and distribution of audio-visual material*

❖ What is the focus of your activities?

Advice and information for the citizens, financing of educational organisations, formation and development of pedagogical staff, surveys and researches in the field of adult education and libraries.

❖ What would you like to emphasise in your activities in the future?

Quality assurances of the offer and more open and flexible ways of learning.

❖ Is your institution part of other departments/institution?

If yes, what are the subject areas of the other parts and how do you connect with them?

The office is part of the department for Italian culture of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano South Tyrol which is constituted by three other offices: office for culture, office for youth services and office for bilinguals and foreign languages.

❖ How could you describe the history of your institution (time of origin as well as goals and objectives, ...)

*The office, as it is now structured and with the actual competencies, was established in 1984 after approval of the local law concerning the organisation of adult education and libraries in South Tyrol . It works particularly in observance of the rules indicated in the specific normative:
"Every citizen has the right to have opportunities of adult education as strengthening and increasing*

of his knowledge and capacities on a personal, civil, professional and social level in the range of available structures" and also "Libraries are structures of public utility which put books and informative material at everyone's disposal, with the aim to further the basic formation and the permanent education of the people, and even the free formation of the thought".

- ❖ How does your institution fit into the framework of institutions and activities in the field of adult education work?

The office has mainly a co-ordination role among the institutions working in the region.

- ❖ Do you have short-term or long-term network-co-operations with similar or supplementary organisations?

The office has a long-term network co-operations with the analogous offices of the "Arge Alp" which is the work community of the Alpine regions.

- ❖ Does your institution operate mainly on a regional/national/international level? (mainly with international partners or rather with regional/national partners or mainly autonomous)

It works mainly on a regional level.

- ❖ Do you have experiences with project-work? And: what are your experiences in the field of transnational projects? (effects on your everyday activities, establishing of long-term co-operations, ...)

Except for the Arge Alp experience, "Re-real" is the first transnational project of the office. Till now it was very interesting to compare the activities of South Tyrol with those of the other countries involved.

- ❖ How many employees work in your institution?

18 persons, 11 of them full time and 7 part-time.

- ❖ How many of these employees do professional work and how many clerical and administrative work? Give some figures on the relationship.

It is difficult to make a clear distinction, because in a public institution administrative (budget, accountancy etc) and professional work (planning and realisation of projects, co-ordination and technical advice) are closely related

- ❖ Is your organisation a profit or non-profit organisation?

It is a public institution.

- ❖ Is it financed by (you can tick more than one)

Public hand: state money.

ENGLAND

370

Name of institution: **Norfolk Adult Education Service**

Your name: Nick Meyer

Describe your role in the institution:

Director of Curriculum - responsible for curriculum development, staff development, quality assurance, guidance training, external contracts and training contracts

❖ Describe briefly the main emphasis of your institution:

Providing adult education for people over 16 in Norfolk

❖ What is the focus of your main activities?

Guidance, advice, courses, development, organisation and structure.

❖ What would you call the main concern of this work?

Curriculum design and development and monitoring quality

❖ What would you like to emphasise in your activities in the future?

Work based learning, increasing participation rates.

❖ Is your institution part of other departments/institutions?

If yes, what are the subject areas of the other parts and how do you connect with them?

Part of the County Council which also provides social services, police, planning and transport, cultural services and economic development.

❖ How could you describe the history of your institution (time of origin as well as goals and objectives...)?

The A E Service was established in the 1950's as a response to the identified need to provide part-time courses for adults. The aims and objectives have always been to provide access to local learning opportunities.

❖ How does your institution fit into the framework of institutions and activities in the field of adult education work?

It is the single largest provider in Norfolk, and provides the majority of non-vocational courses

❖ Do you have short-term or long-term network-co-operations with similar or supplementary organisations?

Norfolk Adult Education Service has network links with other post-16 providers in the county - i.e. the colleges, the University of East Anglia and a number of voluntary sector organisations.

The relationships exist for the purposes of:

- *collaboration - e.g. through the Open College Network, the University for Industry and the Redundancy Advice Network*
- *planning - e.g. avoiding duplication*
- *joint bids to national and international organisations*

- ❖ Does your institution operate mainly on a regional / national / international level?
(mainly with international partners or rather with regional/national partners or mainly autonomous)

The organisation operates mainly on a regional level. Although the organisation is part of the Norfolk City Council, there are links with other Adult Education Services through meetings convened by NIACE (the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education).

- ❖ Do you have experiences with project-work? And: what are your experiences in the field of transnational projects? (effects on your everyday activities, establishing of long-term cooperations,...)

We have a number of projects both locally and transnationally. Local projects include:

- *ESF Languages for Business*
- *Social Services funded reminiscence with older people*
- *The Information Advice and Guidance partnership which funds the delivery of guidance training*

The transnational projects are RE REAL and ESTEEM. The latter involves partners from Italy, Sweden, Belgium and Romania and is producing a CD-ROM, web-site and tutor pack for those interested in environmental education.

The effect on the organisation has been positive in developing co-operative relationships and working on common projects which have informed aspects of the local curriculum.

The time commitment is considerable and it can be hard to integrate projects into existing working patterns. However the relationships established and the creative influences from partner organisations are very important.

- ❖ How many employees work in your institution?
approx. 900

a) full-time
40

b) freelance / part-time
850

c) voluntary workers

d) *Voluntary workers are used in Basic Skills and IT-teaching*

- ❖ How many of these employees do professional work and how many clerical and administrative work? Give some figures on the relationship.

There are approximately 50 in administration and clerical staff, with the vast majority of employees being part-time tutors

❖ Is your organisation a profit or non-profit organisation?

Non-profit

❖ Is your organisation private / mixed / or a public institution?

Public

❖ Is it financed by (you can tick more than one)

- a) **public hand** (subsidies, EU-co-financing ...)
- b) **income / invoices for the provided services / offers**
- c) sponsoring, membership fees
- d) others

The Adult Education Service is a public sector organisation funded by the County Council, the Further Education Funding Council, the national organisation with funds colleges, and from income.

There is also approx. £ 1 million derived from project work, through the ESF Single Regeneration Budget and other funding organisations.