

Workshop Supporting the individual learner in ULLL

Thursday 10 May 2012

Notes taken

by Dr. Marion Bruhn-Suhr, University of Hamburg

Summary of the discussions

1. Presentation by Steffen Breiten, Institut für Performance Management, Leuphana University Lüneburg: Opening Universities for LLL and the challenge of Diversity Management: Comparing groups of non-traditional students in Europe

Breiten's presentation about student support models is based on a survey carried out within the framework of the OPULL (Opening Universities for Lifelong Learning) project. The overall aim of this survey was to develop a best practice example for Germany. The data compared came from the University of Southern Denmark, Leuphana University Lüneburg and the Open University at the University in Helsinki. Denmark and Finland were seen as being ahead of Germany. There are, though, other countries as well which are far ahead of Germany, namely France, where recognition of prior learning is regulated by law and has been successfully practised for many years.

Results of the survey marked a substantial difference between traditional and non-traditional students regarding their support needs, e.g. non-traditional students with at least 3 years' working experience had clear visions of making use of a coaching offer, whereas traditional students were more focused on subject career support.

The survey revealed differences in students' support from the three groups: university, family and friends, and employer and colleagues. An open question was how to influence the support by the employer. All students were looking for personal online guidance, realized via a Q&A forum.

The recognition of degrees based on RPL is critical within the university community in Germany.

It was pointed out that some research and survey results might be available on the EUROSTUDENT website.

2. Presentation by Dr. Marion Bruhn-Suhr, Arbeitsstelle für wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung, University of Hamburg: The Makes and Brakes of Collaborative E-Learning: ONLINE LEARNING IN MANAGEMENT [OLIM], a case study

Here the question of the role of e-trainers and how to recruit them was addressed: incentives for academics from within the university might be based on the image and role of an early adopter. If it comes to external trainers who want to qualify for the new media, they are aware of the fact that in a couple of years, e-training will be the standard. It is important to

employ qualified e-trainers as moderators for the OLIM-programme; they are recruited by intensive networking and by going back to the OLIM-alumni community. Business representatives are really interested in getting involved with the OLIM-target group because they profit from the exchange of ideas, new concepts and because they want to keep in touch with academia.

These e-moderators are employed as associate lecturers; if they were not interested in working with adult learners and in the exchange between academia and the business world, they would not accept the comparatively low pay.

Students who register only for the compulsory module “Virtual Teamwork” have to pay for it, whereas students who move on to another basic or advanced module receive a refund for the compulsory module.

There was a comment on the difference between the terms “online learning” and “e-learning”: e-learning is in general not used for collaborative settings such as the one described, but purely for self-study modules without any collaboration.

3. Helmut Vogt, Arbeitsstelle für wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung, University of Hamburg

Vogt presented an idea followed up from EUCEN's Genova conference in November 2011: the development of a joint postgraduate programme in RPL/APL (certificate or master) for academic staff. After a discussion of the situation in the different countries regarding the legal framework and ideas of possible funding, a working group was set up to follow up the idea by developing a questionnaire to keep records of the current stage of proceedings, to check EU-funding opportunities and to take the idea further. The group consists of Mauro Palumbo (Italy), Helmut Vogt (Germany) and Peter Lassey (UK).