



LEUPHANA
UNIVERSITÄT LÜNEBURG



Opening Universities for LLL and the Challenge of Diversity Management: Support of Non-traditional Students in Europe

**Presentation at the 43rd EUCEN European Conference
„Universities' Engagement in and with Society. The ULLL contribution”.**

Steffen Beiten · 09–11 May 2012 · Graz



Agenda

1. Background: opening universities in Germany
2. Background: barriers for non-traditional students (NTS)
3. The OPULL project
4. Support at OPULL partner universities
5. Quantitative analyses on support
6. The Leuphana model
7. Discussion



Background: opening universities in Germany

- Because of recent socio-political and economic developments, Germany needs to open its universities for new target group
 - **Demographic shift:** Germany is getting “older”. Older employers need to update their knowledge to meet the demands.
 - **Upcoming shortage of skilled workforce:** Especially in technology, mathematics, natural sciences, health care vocationally qualified workers need to gain new knowledge in their fields.
- integrate new target groups in universities



Background: barriers for non-traditional students I

The non-traditional student

- differs from the norm
 - Is disadvantaged
-
- educational biography or background (e.g. adult learners or migrants)
 - entry routes (e.g. without traditional university entrance qualification)
 - mode of study (e.g. distance learning)

Slowey & Schütze, 2000



Background: barriers for non-traditional students II

- Non-traditional students encounter many barriers before and in university

**educational biography
or background**



language, non-familiarity with higher education institutes, work-life-learn-balance

entry routes



different learning environment

mode of study



work-life-learn-balance, longer studies



Background: barriers for non-traditional students III

“(...) guidance, counselling and child care (...) are vital if previously non-traditional learners are not to remain excluded from many areas of the newly differentiated systems of mass higher education.”



Schütze & Slowey,
2002, p. 324








The OPULL project I

■ Focus:

- Changing Missions: Opening and strengthening universities in Europe as high-quality institutions of lifelong learning. A comparative research study for modelling open university perspectives in Germany, Finland, Denmark and the United Kingdom

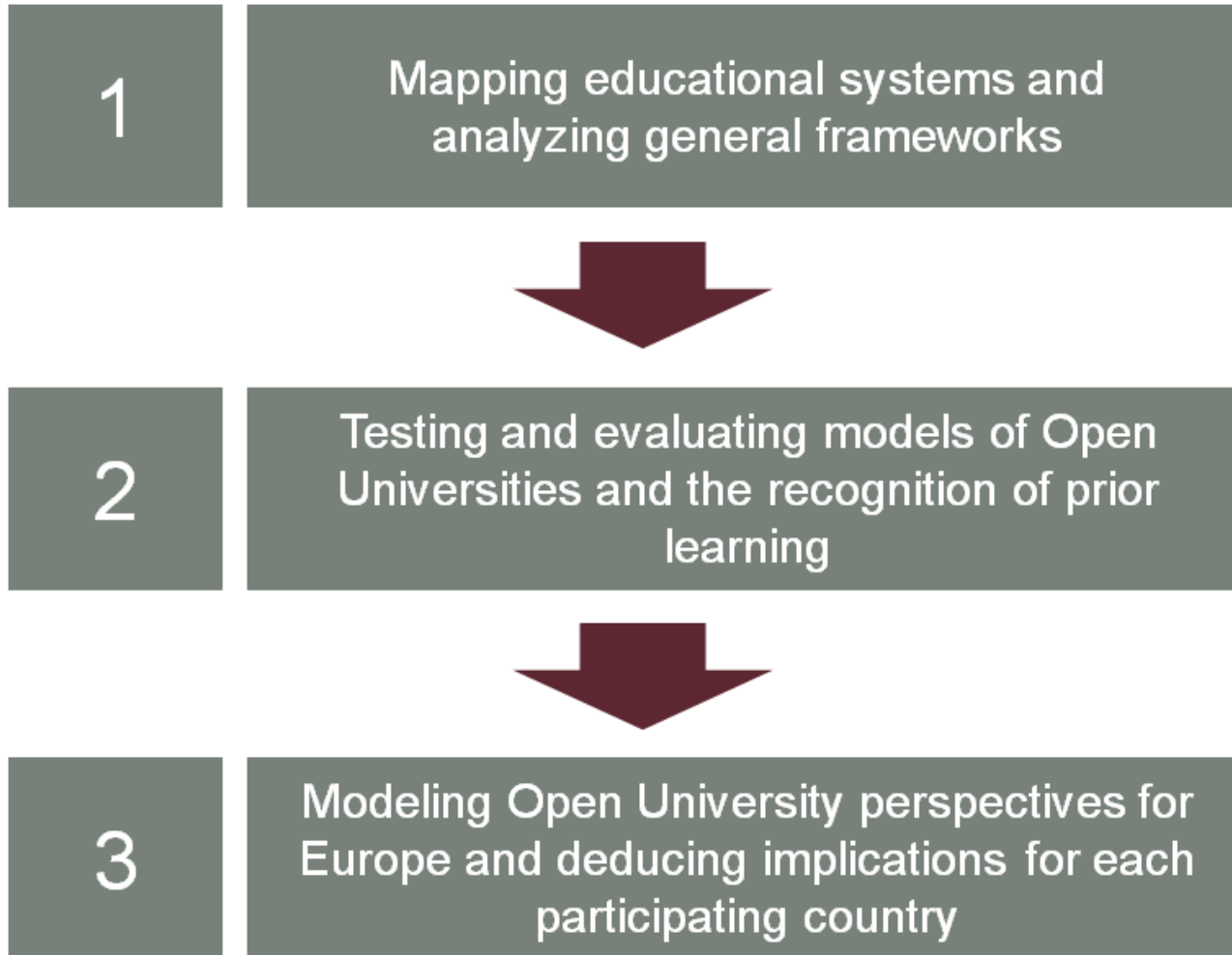
■ Partners:

-  Leuphana University of Lueneburg, Germany (lead partner)
-  University of Southern Denmark
-  Open University at the University of Helsinki
-  The Open University UK
-  Association of Adult Education Initiatives in Lower Saxony (VNB e.V.)
- Advisory board with representatives from academia and higher education policy

■ Funding: German Federal Ministry for Education and Science (BMBWF)



The OPULL project II





Background: supporting non-traditional students I



- personal development plans that help students along their learning path in polytechnics and universities
- individual support is given by counselling to increase the permeability between upper secondary and tertiary education



- admission course, that should function as a bridge to close the gap between vocational training and tertiary education in engineering
- the Aalborg University offers blended learning and distance learning

(Moissidis et al., 2011)



Background: supporting non-traditional students II



- the Distance University Hagen focuses on employed students and distance learning including academic study programs (“*Akademiestudien*”), which are open without admission restrictions
- the project “Open Universities in Lower Saxony” implements LLL in universities including methods for recognising prior learning and specific study programmes for especially vocationally qualified and employed students



- the Open University UK, offers part-time studies, distance learning, support from student advisors, and gives online support (e.g. via Open Learn or iTunes U)

(Moissidis et al., 2011)



Quantitative Analysis I

■ Questionnaire on support

- university support, support of family and friends, support of employers and colleagues (scale from 1=no support to 5=a lot of support)
- questions about the most needed support that universities can give to non-traditional students

■ Sample

- 941 non-traditional students (492 at SDU, 319 at OUHel, 130 at ULG)
- 284 male (30%) and 657 (70%) female students



OUHel






SDU



ULG



Quantitative Analysis II




	university **	family and friends***	employer and colleagues ***
 SDU	M=2.98 (SD=1.12)	4.22 (0.87)	3.56 (1.16)
 ULG	3.22 (0.86)	4.30 (0.72)	3.01 (1.26)
 OUHel	3.21 (1.01)	3.84 (1.01)	2.67 (1.29)

SDU = University of Southern Denmark, ULG = Leuphana University Lüneburg, OUHel = Open University at the University of Helsinki, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, **p<.01, ***p<.001

- support from family and friends was the highest, whereas support from employers and colleagues and from universities was rather moderate
- the variance in the category support of employers and colleagues was quite high indicating greater diversity within the answers
- support from employers and colleagues was the highest at the SDU, where 87 % of the sample are in employment



Quantitative Analysis III

	most important support universities can offer
 SDU	online support and guidance
 ULG	subject-specific career support, one-to-one support (in person or on telephone)
 OUHel	online support and guidance

SDU = University of Southern Denmark, ULG = Leuphana University Lüneburg,
OUHel = Open University at the University of Helsinki, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, **p<.01, ***p<.001

- at the OUHel and SDU non-traditional students rated online support and guidance as the most important support
- at the ULG subject-specific career support and one-to-one support were the most desired by non-traditional students.



Leuphana University an Institution for Lifelong Learning

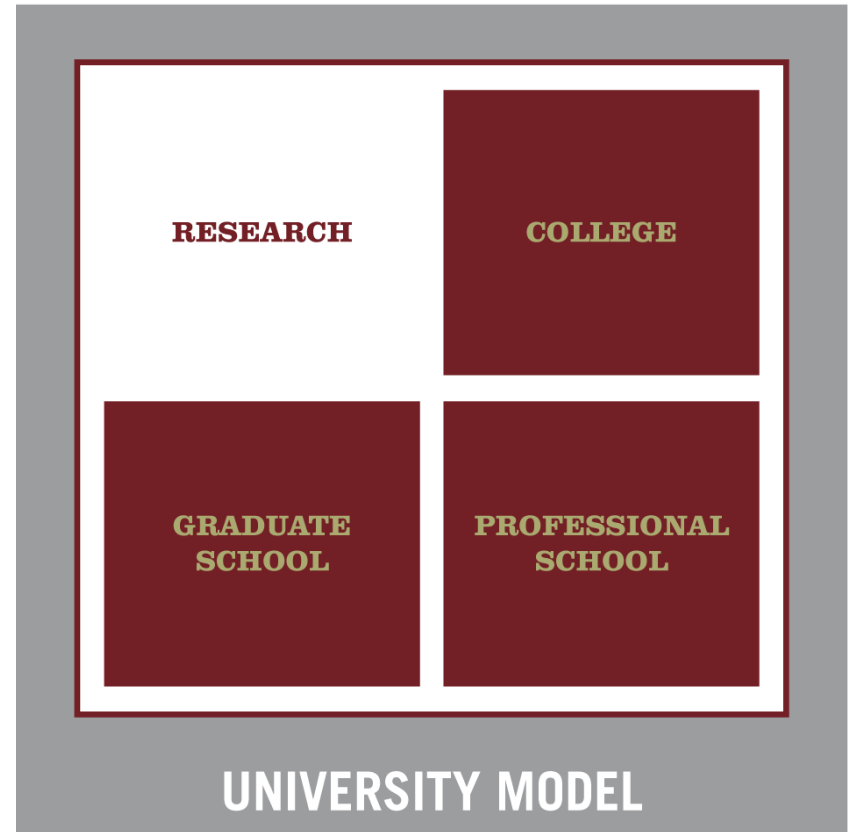
founding year	1946
students in 2011	7.000
employees in 2011	920
thereof faculty	400
thereof professors	160
total budget in 2011	approx. 108 Mio. Euro
number of faculties	4





The Leuphana model I

- the Leuphana model subdivides the university into four transdisciplinary entities, each dedicated to specific purposes.
- three different schools take part in the academic research.
 - **College:** offers undergraduate Bachelor programs
 - **Graduate School:** graduate studies on Master's and PhD level
 - **Professional School:** MBAs and continuing education for companies, public facilities, NPOs/NGOs
- this model is meant to be integrative and consistently reflect the idea of lifelong learning.





The Leuphana model II

Opening to new target Groups

opening the university to new target groups that conventionally do not have access to higher education.

Interchange- ability between educational systems

facilitating the transitions between vocational and higher education through the recognition of prior learning and competences.

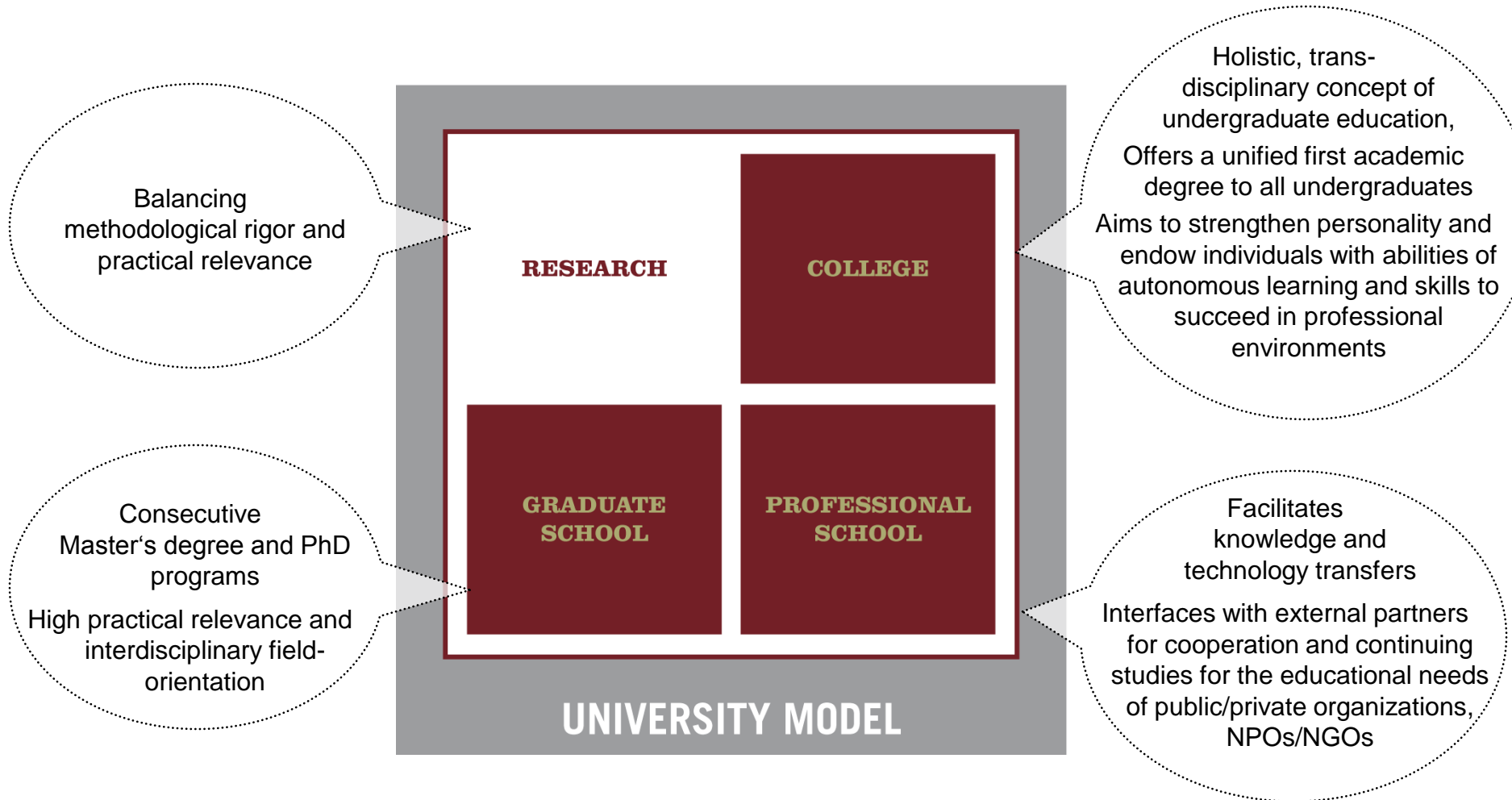
Integration of different educational offerings

bringing together agents in vocational and academic education at the university.



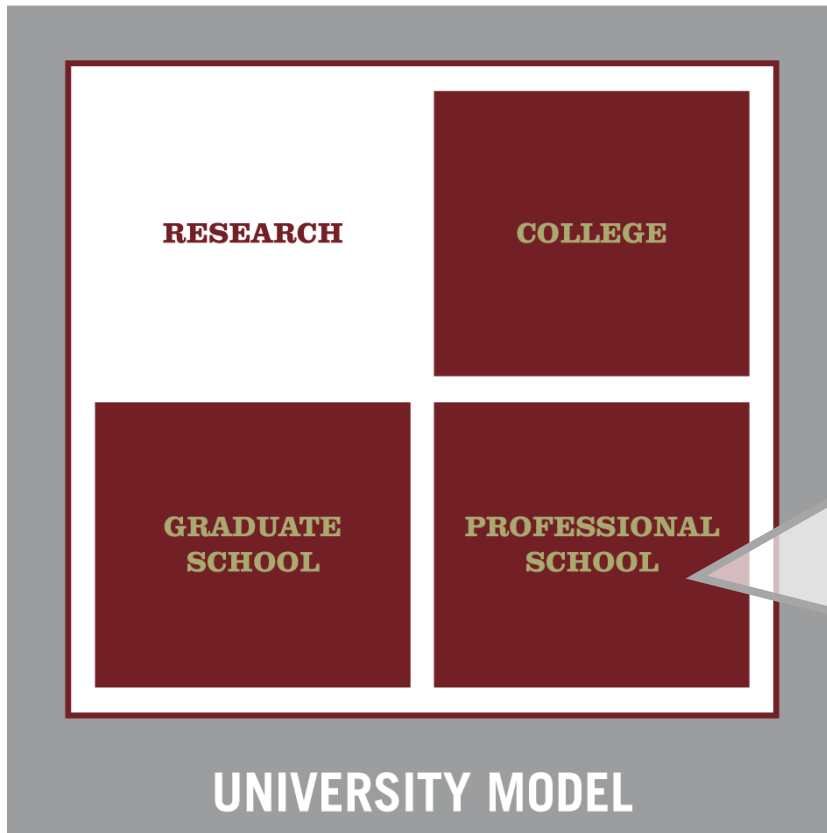


The Leuphana model III





The Leuphana model IV



Supporting non-traditional students

- teaching staff with professional experience
- innovative, practically oriented teaching methods
- open access and distance learning
- individual online and face-to-face support



The Leuphana model V

■ Supporting non-traditional students via...

...teachers with professional experience

- build a stronger relationship between the university and enterprises
- teachers know work related problems and offer support

...innovative, practically oriented teaching methods

- problem-related, praxis-related teaching and learning methods
- study content is related to work and therefore transferable

...open access and distance learning

- value vocational experience
- offer recognition of prior learning (in progress)
- distance- and blended-learning
- weekend courses

...individual online and face-to-face support

- mentoring and coaching
- after work contact hours
- individual online support



Conclusion and Discussion

■ Conclusion

- the results of the quantitative analysis of the OPULL project underline that non-traditional students need more and qualitatively better support from universities and employers
- especially individual and personal support is requested by students from this sample. Responding to the challenges and needs of these new target groups, personal support via online guidance, one-to-one support and subject specific career support are the necessary tools that universities can offer

■ Discussion

- What barriers do non-traditional students encounter in your country?
- How are (non-traditional) students supported at your university?



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Thank you very much for your attention.



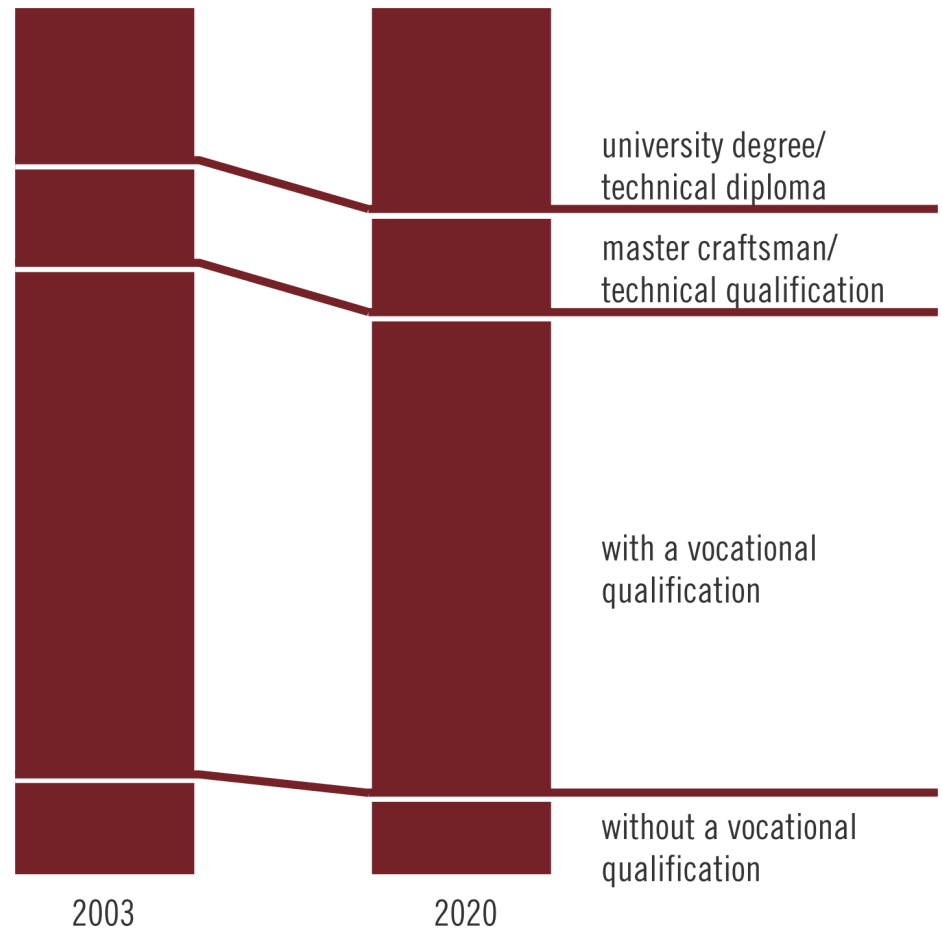
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Back up: opening universities in Germany

- Workforce needed up to 2020 in the different qualification levels.
- The need for qualified employees and especially for academically qualified employees will continue to grow in the next few years



Source: IZA Research Report No. 9, 2007