ET2020 working group
on adult learning policy

Improving the use of ICT and OER in adult learning

Oslo, 11-13 March 2015

Austria:

Online learning free of charge

The Austrian situation regarding ICT services for education and related indicators

According to Innovation Index (2015), *Eurydice "Widening Access" (2015) and the Digital Agenda Scoreboard* (Commission):

- AT is ranking around or slightly above the EU average in almost all Europ. ICT indicators (computers for educational purposes are given for 55 from 100 students)

- Graphs for details:
  https://www.dropbox.com/s/4jgfyer68r4gqcw/Pres_Oslo_Graphs.pdf?dl=0

Policy landscape (strategy)

"e-fit 21 –digital learning"-strategy for Austria
http://www.efit21.at)

- Overarching umbrella strategy for intensified digital learning in all areas of education

- Defines fields of action, annual priorities, and concrete projects

- Pol. owner: Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs, Steering group on ICT

Policy example: a special MOOC

… was built on the expertise and the engagement of two scientists (Ebner & Schön) → from the HE sector (3 universities) in coop. with a German NGO (without ministerial or central steering)

…. supporting institutions, course providers and learners feel they are common owners of the policy

This seems to be typical – see background document by Jan Hylén:

"As shown by UNESCO until recently almost all mobile learning initiatives in Europe were initiated on the meso level. These meso-level initiatives are usually R&D projects led by researchers, technology companies and to some extent NGOs."

Policy example

"Online learning free of charge" is a special MOOC

1. aiming to develop the competences of "online learning" (tool = content)
2. designed for the situation of beginners (lower-skilled learners)
3. under a creative commons-licence: material can be used, changed, re-published even in a commercial context (OER)

► *contents & intro (7 min video):* *http://youtu.be/5GR34YImY9o*

► *details:* http://imoox.at/wbtmaster/courseMooc.htm?onlinelernen

(for the details on iMOOx, you have to login with @-address)

"Online learning free of charge"

Key partners:

- Fin. Support: province of Styria + the Association of Austrian Adult Education Centres + Salzburg Research

- About 30 partner institutions (libraries, AE providers,… in AT and DE) distributed the workbook

- The media were key partners (to some extent) to reach lower-skilled learners.

- 14 voluntary multipliers (facilitators) who provided face-to-face groups.

- Platform iMooX: provided by University of Technology Graz + University of Graz, under the patronage of the UNESCO

Did it work? What worked?

- about 850 participants after 3 weeks (now about 1000)

- feedback was very positive

- accompanying services (workbook distribution; local groups)

- additional online meetings (also for teachers/trainers)

- local PR: free magazines, public video screens (limited)

- running as a "course" 10-12/14 - now content available without service - as a "course" again in autumn 2015

- open resource for learners but also for teachers and educ. providers: CC BY-licence (is not a MOOC-standard)

Why did it work?

- **"Inverse blended learning"** as a special concept to reach lower-skilled learners: an online tool (Mooc) was **enriched by learning offers for the daily non-digital life** (partner institutions; printed workbooks; group meetings)*

- Learners were approached via media like free journals and public screens, not only via internet

- Instructions on learning competences came together with instructions on internet tools (learning plan included)

- Very simple language, explanations for techn. terms + glossary

* Group meetings were either located at educ. providers (even embedded in an existing ICT course), or they were regular meetings in a private flat (even in Israel!). This is a possible link between "industrial model" and "coaching model" (→ Mireille Betrancourt)

Evaluation Results *

- 850 persons until Dec 14, now around 1000 (large number)

- Meetings + workbooks were rated as very useful

- Most participants came due to personal recommendations (via social media or offline) (other PR not successful)

- 14% of participants finished the course with a „certificate"

  (usually in MOOCs under 10%, see Khalil/Ebner 2014)

- But: > 90% of successful participants had at least HE-access

- More of 50% of them had participated in an accompanying group (online or face to face) and that helped them to persist.

* Evaluation activities: user statistic; questionnaires for group facilitators and for learners; analysis of forum contributions .

Lessons learned

- "Inversed blended learning" was confirmed (successful participants had needed group offers for persistence).

- The inversed model as well as the creative commons-licence is a good offer to AE providers: These AE providers are usually reluctant regarding OER because they fear to lose their learners.

- The typical MOOC-User is still academic (or with HE-access) – yet even more effort is needed to reach lower-skilled (e.g. by additional phone-support like in the PT teacher education).

- Impact / changes made by this policy → a beginning change in learning culture more than an immediate course output.