



Showcases of University Strategies and Business Models for Lifelong Learning

Martin Watkinson and Luis Tinoca

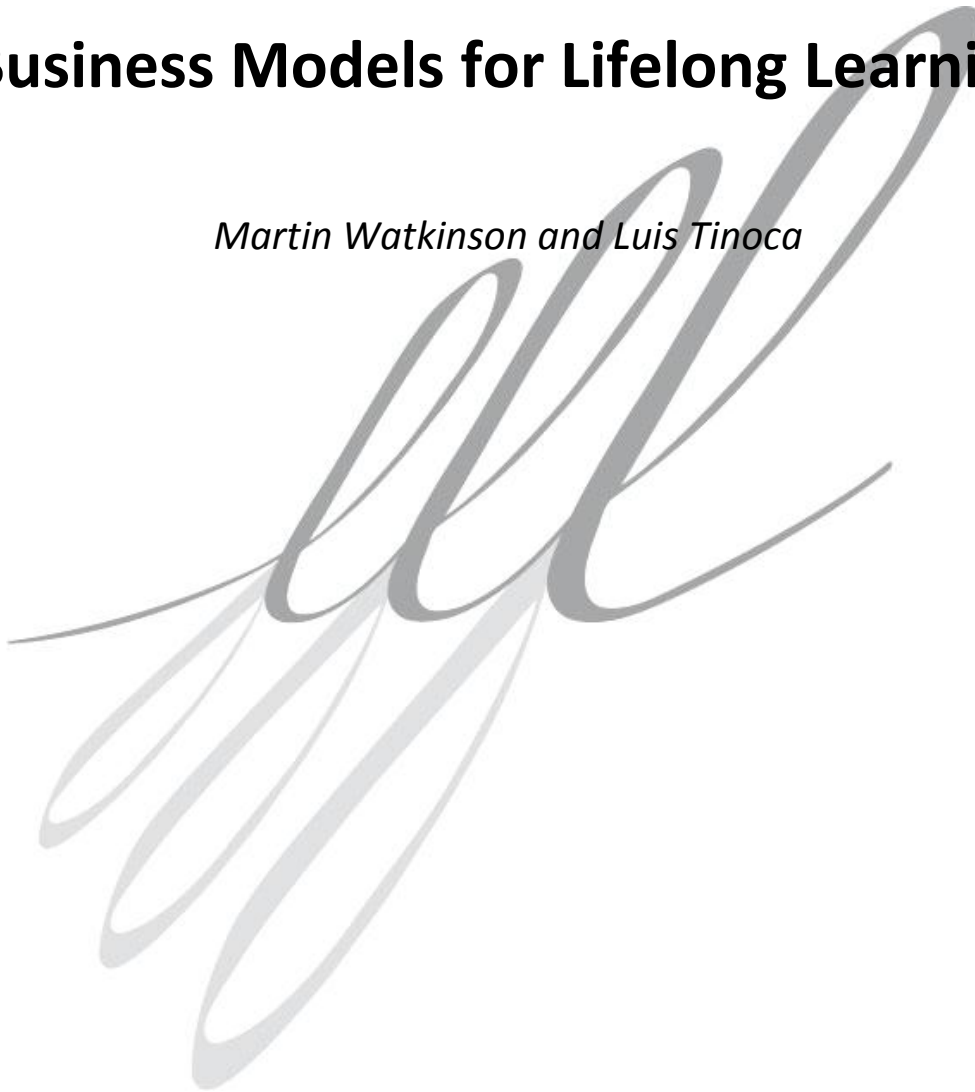


USBM

university strategies
and business models
for lifelong learning

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Martin Watkinson and Luis Tinoca





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The scenario for lifelong learning

by Luis Tinoca

Executive summary

This report introduces the scenario for Lifelong Learning (LLL) in European Higher Education. With it, we expect to enhance the organisation of LLL opportunities in Europe by paving the way for actual changes in institutional strategies.

We start by reflecting on what can be interpreted as LLL, clarifying some of the different interpretations of what LLL can be like and introducing our own working definition for LLL as the continued education and training of people throughout their adult lives. Encompassing all academic levels and all forms of learning, whether formal, non-formal, or informal, but focusing our interest in the continuing education and training of people at higher education level through structured (formal, non-formal or informal) courses or activities offered by Institutions of Higher Education. Furthermore we discuss some of the European policy frameworks already in place, and some of the current efforts to implement LLL opportunities in throughout Europe, as well as some of the main obstacles still standing in its way. Next, we explore and characterize the diversity of the LLL student profile, mainly as an adult employed professional, and argue how all traditional sectors are represented in the LLL spectrum of experiences, including formal, non-formal and informal learning offers. We then explore some of the opportunities presented by these three types of learning, and pay particular attention to how non-formal and informal experiences can contribute to LLL. Moreover, gathering the experiences shared by the participating we developed a list of success factors for organizing LLL around three main areas: content, pedagogical delivery, and organizational issues. Finally, we illustrate the potential of LLL with three representative examples of good practices that exemplify how institutions of higher education can develop successful LLL opportunities, in a variety of forms, and across traditional disciplinary fields.

1. Introduction

Lifelong learning (LLL) is about developing structures for continuing education that can fit the realities of professional life and help complete the knowledge that people acquire during their careers and renew or develop their existing knowledge.

Although LLL is as a concept broadly supported and strongly recognised by universities, governments and the EU, it is still in the starting phase of actually being implemented. LLL is not yet organised sufficiently at most universities which can easily be explained when looking at their principle task and target groups. In general universities are bound to their conventional business models focussing on research and innovation and educational programming in the BA/MA structure. This is the right strategy for the target group of traditional students. Entering the field of the LLL-student means developing new strategies and business models and consequently entering a partly unknown area. This explains for the bigger part the hesitation of most universities to take the next step in organising lifelong learning.



1.1 Objectives and approach

The main aim is to boost the organisation of LLL in universities by paving the way for actual changes in institutional strategies. We therefore need to involve and stimulate stakeholders (universities, governments, social partners and businesses) to seek progress in operating in LLL and show them the possibilities and opportunities of organising this.

Our objective is to develop university strategies and new business models of LLL on the European level in a collaborative setting of conventional universities and distance teaching universities. This will be the basis for starting the development of institutional strategies and new business models at the local university level. We will start from current best practice, innovative projects and strategies of the partners. This project intends to lead to greater awareness raising in the academic community for organising LLL.

The EADTU Taskforce USBM as a core group guided the project progress on content and was responsible for the production of this report on sectors and target groups for LLL, success factors of organising LLL and existing successful business models. This first report intends to reflect the analyses done and present the findings of crucial elements in organising LLL and be the basis for the new business models in relation to local university strategy building.

1.2 Initial distinctions

Adult education and lifelong learning are diverse issues. There are many different definitions of lifelong learning in use. As to lifelong learning, we prefer to adhere to the definition of the European Commission. It defines lifelong learning as all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence, within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective.

Lifelong learning entails all forms of learning: formal learning, such as a degree course followed at the university; non-formal learning, such as vocational skills acquired at the workplace; and informal learning, such as learning how to play an instrument together with friends.

Adult learning is part of the much broader activity of lifelong learning. Part of lifelong learning is adult learning, defined as all forms of learning undertaken by adults after having left initial education and training, however far this process may have gone.

Finally, there is no simple definition of higher education. Other terms used are post-secondary or tertiary education, third-stage or third level education. We refer to higher education as the education at both the undergraduate level (sometimes referred to as tertiary education) and the graduate (or *postgraduate*) level) leading to a degree-level or foundation degree qualification. Having this said, when we use the expression LLL, we are in fact referring to the part of this activity undertaken by adults, having left initial education and training.

1.3 Working definition of lifelong learning (LLL)

Lifelong learning is the continued education and training of people throughout their adult lives. It encompasses all academic levels and all forms of learning, whether formal, non-formal, or informal, but our interest is in the continuing education and training of people at higher education level through structured (formal, non-formal or informal) courses or activities offered by Higher



Education Institutions (HEIs). Lifelong learning is important in securing economic prosperity, promoting social cohesion and enabling people to fulfill their potential.

2. Organising lifelong learning in a European context

2.1 European policy frameworks

According to the European Commission (2007), “key competences for lifelong learning are a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context. They are particularly necessary for personal fulfillment and development, social inclusion, active citizenship and employment” (p.1).

These competences are recognized as essential in a knowledge society and guarantee more flexibility in the labour force, allowing it to adapt more quickly to constant changes in an increasingly interconnected world. They are also recognized as a major factor in innovation, productivity and competitiveness, and they contribute to the motivation and satisfaction of workers and the quality of work.

Such competences should be acquired not only by young people at the end of their compulsory education and training equipping them for adult life, particularly for working life, while forming a basis for further learning; but also by adults throughout their lives through a process of developing and updating skills (European Commission, 2007, p.1)

Moreover, the acquisition of key competences fits in with the principles of equality and access for all. This reference framework also applies in particular to disadvantaged groups whose educational potential requires support. Examples of such groups include people with low basic skills, early school leavers, the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities or migrants, etc.

2.2 National policy framework and instruments regarding lifelong learning

Even though most participating partners (OUNL, FernUniversität, Uninettuno, MESI, Anadolu, KUL, Aarhus University ...) are already functioning within a national policy framework, that has been strongly influenced by the existing guidelines and recommendations within the official plan resulting from the European Union legislation, particularly the **Memorandum on Lifelong Learning** (Commission of the European Communities, 30th of October 2000) and the **Decision 2006/1720/CE** (European Parliament and Council, 15th of November 2006), there are also some who mention the fact that there is still an absence of national policy in this matter (UAb, Lund University, Linköping University...)

Some of the main points emanating from such policy frameworks include:

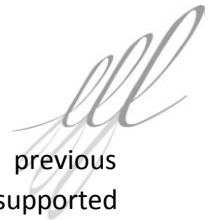
- Higher Education Institutions (HEI) play an important role in supplying training actions to non-traditional adult students (individuals who abandoned the education institutions before obtaining any qualification; individuals who never attended Higher Education institutions; individuals who come from economically and socially underprivileged groups) with the consequent need to invest more decisively in drawing those publics, through the creation of guiding services; the diversification of training supply; the adoption of new pedagogical strategies; the development of distance education; the implementation of new methods for assessment and validation of competences.



- The implementation of LLL actions in Higher Education should take into account the financing of the institutions and students, in order to minimize the effects of inequalities in their access.
- Due attention should be given by the HEI concerning the requalification of unemployed persons with higher education, given through post-graduation courses in areas where employment is available.
- Continuing vocational training for teachers should be organized on the basis of multiannual training plans, taking into consideration the individual plans for teachers' training.
- It is necessary to define a policy for training instructors, in consultation with the HEIs, as a way to fulfill the needs and overcome the lack of quality detected in some Training Centers.
- It is necessary to create networks which incorporate HEI, training centers, and pedagogical associations for teachers, who are involved in joint training and research projects.
- Because LLL is not limited to the professional plan, and it is a matter of citizenship as well, it will definitely be beneficial for the HEI to sound the companies' needs in order to develop adequate training programs, leading to a network project. Within this ambit, it is proposed by the above mentioned Report the creation of LLL Regional Centers which include the representatives of the several different institutions involved. These Centers will establish priorities and coordinate the supply at a regional level.

However, in spite of the formulated ambitions the different stakeholders in the lifelong learning arena still point some important obstacles:

- Government sees for itself no decisive role since adult education is considered to be 'primarily the responsibility of the market'.
- The educational system seems to be failing to address the lifelong learning agenda by not being sufficiently open to providing courses for students in later stages of life.
- In addition, universities tend to offer the same courses to the same age groups and fail to open up to other types of learning and learner groups, such as non-degree retraining courses for adults or gap courses for students not progressing through the traditional learning routes.
- Although significant in terms of annual turnover, commercial providers of education offer predominantly non-formal education in specific areas, mostly not leading to formal degrees and qualifications.
- Employers' federations and trade unions refer to each other as the one who has to make the first move.
- People are very reluctant to engage in educational activities, as they will have to progress through the traditional learning routes.
- Lack of accreditation/certification
- Wide competition from small and medium sized private providers
- Absence of ICT competencies in HEI
- Lack of recognition of elearning
- Lack of adequate infrastructure to support large number of distance education students
- Trade Unions, Associations of professionals, chamber of commerce and all the organization of workers pretend to be able to exercise by themselves the learning programs without any competences or any quality standard



- Employer's claim for a certificate on formal education and ignorance of previous professional experience and non-certificated education, self-education or even supported non-formal education
- Fight for resources – especially manpower, particularly in dual mode universities.

In the Netherlands, for example, in 2008, the OECD has expressed its concern regarding the progress that Dutch universities (including the colleges for higher education) show in this respect. This slow progress implies risking the fall of enrolment rates in higher education in view of coming demographic change.

2.3 Current efforts to implement lifelong learning

Most (probably all) partner institutions have clearly in their mission statements the support and development of LLL activities. Moreover, in many cases special departments and/or foundations (such as the Secretariat for Further Education at Aarhus University, the GALV office at AUB, Fundacion UNED, the Netherlands Laboratory for Lifelong Learning, the Institute of Further Professional Education within MESI) have been created to target specifically the development and implementation of LLL courses and activities.

There seems to be a clear understanding for the need of a new European infrastructure where anyone can develop and refresh her or his competences at any time at any place. The key element in this infrastructure is lifelong, open and flexible learning (LOF-learning) available for everyone. Linking up with formal education, an expansion is needed to forms of education that are not primarily aimed at acquiring diplomas, but also to education that recognizes competencies that have been gained elsewhere and in alternative ways; to education that eliminates thresholds and motivates more people to enroll for study programs and to keep studying.

For this, Europe may well be served by its Open and Distance Learning or LOF universities. The label of LOF universities is ideally characterizes those universities in terms of both the specific target groups (Lifelong learners) and the educational model (a truly Open system with Flexible learning paths). Where "conventional universities" are still fixed on 18-25 years old students, in a 'closed' educational system (with little freedom), emphasizing onsite face-to-face teaching and far away from flexible offerings, the LOF learning universities are in a good position to build and expand on their tradition and experience. They focus on the development of learning materials in a distance learning context, primarily meant for independent self-study. Therefore their content is rich in pedagogy and didactics and incorporates learning guidance and tutoring elements. It is designed to be accessible to individuals, studying at home or at work, appropriate for their circumstances and meeting their needs. The learning process takes place in an online (or: virtual) learning environment, which supports various kinds of interaction: student-student as well as student-tutor or teacher, both individual and grouped.

Various national and international initiatives demonstrate the possible success of LOF learning. To name some:

- R&D programs of Celstec: www.ou.nl/celstec
- The Netherlands Laboratory for Lifelong Learning (NELLL): <http://www.ou.nl/eCache/DEF/1/92/850.html>
- OpenER project: www.opener.ou.nl
- Wikiwijs project : www.wikiwijsinhetonderwijs.nl



- GALV: www.univ-ab.pt/ualv/
- fundacion UNED: www.fundacion.uned.es
- UNED Open Course Ware: <http://ocw.innova.uned.es/ocwuniversia>
- The open programme: <http://www3.open.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/open-programme/index.htm>
- Openlearn: <http://www.open.ac.uk/openlearn/home.php>

3. Sectors and target groups in lifelong learning

3.1 The LLL student

Even though a person at any age can be considered a LLL student (according to the working definition), for this project we are only targeting adults over 18 years. Moreover, the partner institutions consider no formal distinction between LLL and “ordinary” students. However, some demographics are shared by the partners:

- most of their LLL students are over the age of 25
- the average age ranges from 30 to 38 years old
- more than 60% are enrolled in traditional undergraduate and graduate degrees
- more than 50% are employed professionals

3.2 Relevant sectors

It is clear, from the partners shared experiences, that all traditional sectors are represented in the lifelong learning spectrum of experiences. Therefore, we will focus here on some of the main programmes being offered under the proposed definition for LLL, encompassing formal, non-formal and informal learning offers.

Formal learning opportunities still represent the bulk of the LLL offer under the Bachelors- Masters- Doctoral (B-M-D) programs traditionally offered by HEIs.

Non-formal learning opportunities are clearly a growing area where, even though several HEIs have already made a significant investment, many others still have a long road ahead of them. Under this label we can find many short courses (Specialization courses, Teacher training, Professional development, Language training, Courses for senior citizens, etc.) that even though not attributing any formal degrees; often entitle some type of certification and are frequently structured under ECTS credits so as to allow its participants to later profit from these experiences towards a formal B-M-D degree.

Informal learning experiences are still an underdeveloped fragment of LLL, even though some significant strides have already been given, particularly in the areas of “Open Course Ware” (with significant examples emanating from the OUUK, OUNL and UNED), and from experiences linking both HEIs and museums. However, this is clearly the most underdeveloped of these three sectors.



4. Success factors for organizing lifelong learning

From the partners contributions we were able to develop a list of success factors in organizing LLL around three main areas: content, pedagogical delivery, and organizational issues.

4.1 Content

These are mainly concerned with the development of the LLL course and experiences content, to be made available to the participants. They include:

- Detailed analyses of (latent) market demands / needs analysis before initiating the program.
- Certification remains a strong 'selling point'. University certification stands for academic quality. Yet not all participants are necessarily looking for a diploma – some programmes run on the basis of a strong interest for the topic.
- Brand name of University is strong selling point
- The course is of high quality and informed by the latest research.
- The course fills a gap in the market; the capacity to identify the specific educational needs existing in a territory.
- The topic of the course (current, relevant to the field, novelty).
- Offers that relate to societal themes/issues that are important tend to be more successful (eg. Programme on the Environment).
- Offers that relate to a certain need in society or in a specific field of work seem to be more successful.
 - ✓ Some professions require continuing education to keep their title.
 - ✓ Some professions require professionalization.
- Offers that are interdisciplinary seem to attract a larger public.
- Offers which include speakers or experts who are active as professionals in their field (as opposed to researchers) seem to attract a larger public.
- Involvement of external stakeholders (employers, professional associations) in strategic planning and conceptual design and/or delivery of study programmes as early as possible
- Collaboration with stakeholders, public authorities (Ministries, Armed Forces etc.) consider the success of the participants in promotion and payrolls (reward and motivation).

4.2 Pedagogical delivery

Just as important as high quality content is an appropriate and carefully designed pedagogical delivery design. Even though great importance in LLL delivery as been given to ODL methodologies, blended learning and face-to-face instruction can also be considered here. Special emphasis should be given to:

- Attention for authentic examples: the more lectures or learning activities relate to experiences or real life examples, the higher the involvement and the more effective learning tends to be.
- LOF learning offers: Lifelong, Open and Flexible Learning offers using the Internet



- A learner-oriented flexible educational model that is capable of promoting and assess individual learning processes.
- Attention for involvement and interaction (making use of the experience the participants have).
- Excellent tutorial support.
- The course is easily accessible.
- The teaching is done at a time and place and through media which best suits the students.
- The provision of continuous feed-back to the students, especially the promptness of replies.
- Quality learning materials supported by e-Learning portal.
- Accessibility of the materials.
- The provision of clear information from the beginning of the course.
- A learner-oriented organizational structure.
- Regularly updated e-Learning Strategy, integrated with Learning and Teaching Strategy and all related strategies
- Student Satisfaction survey which explicitly addresses the main issues of relevance to students.

4.3 Organizational issues

Finally, it is also extremely important to take into account several organizational issues. Organizational factors, even though often relegated to a marginal role, can be determinant for the success of any LLL experience. In particular, HEIs should take into account:

- When planning for time
 - ✓ If necessary, plan courses on a fixed day in the week, preferably in the evening or during the weekend (Sat. morning).
 - ✓ Plan programmes so they are time and location independent (digital support; e-learning – or combination via blended learning).
- When looking for a location
 - ✓ Plan programmes at a fixed location.
 - ✓ Plan programmes so they are location independent (digital support).
- When organizing the support structure for the students make sure there is a helpdesk, that there are contact points – both in the teaching staff for content-related issues and in the support staff for organizational issues.
- There are no qualifications for entry.
- Fees are affordable.
- The infrastructure is first class.
- Program evaluation (results of surveys providing feedback from participants).
- First class logistics.
- Student funding and scholarship system adjusted to the living circumstances of lifelong learners.
- Overall quality of the whole system.

Even though the above list may seem quite extensive, one pattern seems to emerge – the need for a careful development and implementation plan. It is fundamental to start by taking the initiative to adjust the universities offer to societal demands, preferably with the involvement of other



stakeholders, such as: Ministries; private companies (banks, foundations SMEs); training centers, NGOs; Alumni associations; Local authorities; IT industries; and Mass media. Next, the programme should be carefully designed to adhere to the suggested criteria, providing comprehensive support to the participants through e-learning technologies and supporting their motivation with authentic activities and stakeholders' participation. Finally, special attention should also be given to programs evaluation and revision with the input of both participants and stakeholders.

5. Examples of good practices

5.1 Virtual Environmental Consultancy

The Virtual Environmental Consultancy (VEC), at OUNL, is an educational module at BSc graduation level in which learning and work experience have been fully integrated in a distance learning environment. Virtual collaboration has grown in importance ever since the internationalization of companies. Virtual working has enabled company members to collaborate with each other from different locations. In today's global and multinational business environment, virtual collaboration holds a position in its own right. Students however lack the so needed experience with online working. For students to gain a firsthand experience in online working, Remote Internships are needed. By Remote Internships, students enter online working situations and obtain a true working experience. Remote Internships are an instrument for (particularly) the distance education students to gain practical experience, as moreover, Remote Internships are not so common in distance education. Started in 1998 as an experiment in combining learning and work experience in a virtual company, for over 10 years the School of Science of the Open Universiteit Nederland offers Remote Internships in the Virtual Environmental Company, as final part of their distance learning Bachelor-of-Science programme in Environmental Sciences.

The VEC offers a networked learning environment that resembles an authentic professional situation. Students and teachers working in the VEC carry out real projects for real external clients, and deliver real products by scholarly advise reports to the clients with the accompanying (management) instruments. The module involves two parallel processes, one focussing on professional development (work experience in vocational research projects) and the other focussing on personal development (student-centered learning). The professional development process is directed to delivering high quality products to the external clients, in according to both the client's needs and to the academic quality conditions of the university-based company. The personal development scheme is devoted to the enhancement of academic and professional competences of the individual student employees. Although the VEC was specifically developed to support learning and earning work experiences in distance education, over the past years the VEC was also used as an educational module in conventional academic programmes with daytime students. The characteristics of the VEC, like the remote internships, online team collaboration and the VEC company electronic project environment supports asynchronous networked collaboration, personally fitted to the individual needs of each student.

More than ten years experience with the VEC has helped the OUNL to find out whether and how such a learning environment can be successfully implemented. The VEC design and the learning outcomes in the context of Learning for Sustainable Development were described by Ivens, de Kraker, Bitter & Lansu (2007). The Virtual Environmental Company as a networked environment for Remote Internships was studied as part of an EU LEONARDO project, directed to enhance the knowledge transfer from academy to the professional field and vice versa by remote internships.



The results of this study (Löhr & Lansu (2008); Lansu, Löhr & van Dorp (2009) show that the VEC concept produces high quality both on the advisory products and on the learning support of the individual students.

The aims of the VEC are two-fold. First, to confront students in the final stage of their BSc study in the Environmental Sciences with the dynamics and complexity of real-life professional practice. This gives students the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the professional field. It supports them in acquiring the necessary skills by immersing them in authentic practice, offering them a realistic rich learning context. Second: to optimally support the students' personal competence development, by offering educational support and at the same time familiarising the students with the need to renew their competences time and again; the lifelong learning competence needed for each professional.

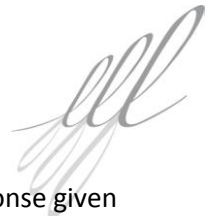
This course combines in an effective way the needs of adult students for workplace learning on a distance. In the course the students meet real employers in the field by working on authentic research tasks provided by these clients. The design of the module offers both flexibility in choice of research project and in choice of personal development to fit in the adults former expertise. Studying this course as a learning environment the adult learner entering a new, scientific professional field starts in the mid of a professional network; he/she is right from the start active participant in the knowledge transfer between employers in the environmental sciences, academics and fellow adult students with a rich diversity of expertise. The combination of team research work with individual competence development diminish the amount of tutor support needed in thesis work. The VEC is a successful competence-based learning environment that served as a model for a learning environment for Maastricht University, NL (Environmental Health in Life Sciences), Fontys Professional University, NL (Applied Sciences) and Leuphana University Lüneburg, D (interdisciplinary Sustainable Development Science)

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5.2 On-the-job Training Course

The On-the-job Training Course (OTC), at UAb, is a particularly relevant example of a response given to a great need for training. Following a collaboration protocol between Universidade Aberta and the Union of Teachers of Lisbon Region (SPGL, *Sindicato dos Professores da Grande Lisboa*), a number of contacts were established with the structures from the State Department of Education from the Ministry of Education in order to supply a Course which would make it possible to attain the professionalization of teachers in basic and secondary levels, so that they would be able to develop the career and evolve professionally.

The Course has the normal duration of two semesters. The first semester is preceded by an entirely virtual module – online adaptation – 2 weeks long. This Course conveys a certificate for professional qualification of teachers. The attainment of this certificate depends on the successful conclusion of all its curricular units, totaling 40 ECTS. 466 teachers from all over the country have already attended this Course, representing almost 40% of the teachers who admitted to lack this training, according to numbers disseminated by the Unions in this sector.

Following the success of the first edition of this Course, a second edition is expected to take place within the next school year in 2009-2010, thus contributing to reach, by the end of the year, a greater number of teachers capable of staying in or integrating the teaching career in compliance with the law.

5.3 The Pentalfa programme

The Pentalfa programme represents multidisciplinary interactive postgraduate long-distance education created by the Faculty of Medicine, supported by the Flemish Hospitalnetwork of the K.U.Leuven.

The goal of the Pentalfa programme is to offer postgraduate education of the Faculty of Medicine in Leuven in an interactive way in every region in Flanders. Therefore a connection is created through the most advanced devices for videoconferencing between Leuven and five different regions in Flanders, one in every province. This way, doctors can follow the same program each in their own region and from different locations spread around Flanders, and have a conversation with the other participants as well. As such, Pentalfa is optimizing post-graduate education by exchanging transport-time for effective hours of learning and discussing.

Each year Pentalfa provides a multidisciplinary program of diverse disciplines of Medicine. Pentalfa tries to contact a broad group of graduated doctors and/or experts from the public health sector. The sessions' subjects are very broad; from acute allergic reactions of children or complications in breast cancer therapy to malnutrition in hospital.

A rotation system defines which hospitals partake in which sessions. Overall there are 25 sessions every academic year that each take place on a Thursday night.

The educational quality is guaranteed by the scientific coordination group that composes the program. This group is formed by the representatives of the K.U.Leuven, coming from different disciplines of the U.Z. Leuven and the participating hospitals of the Flemish hospital network.

During each session four or five guest speakers, each of them specialists in their own discipline, give an interactive presentation. These presentations take place in the Pentalfa auditory in Leuven on the Campus Gasthuisberg of the Faculty of Medicine of the K.U.Leuven. Sometimes a presentation



can be organized from one of the guest locations. A central moderator in Leuven, who usually also coordinates the scientific content of the session, is assisted by a moderator at each site. A session lasts 2.5 hrs and includes several speakers presenting the topic from different angles.

Discussions between speakers and participants on all different locations that are put on screen by various cameras take place after each presentation, with often a general discussion to conclude the session. To increase the interaction with the participants, clinical case presentations or provocative viewpoints are often used. This in order to grade up the interactive aspect. All of these discussions are coordinated by the moderators. The participants can follow everything through two video screens imbedded in one, one showing the speaker, the other showing the audience. Another screen shows visual aids like for instance PowerPoint presentations, graphs or movie fragments.

The whole session can be reviewed through streaming or podcast at home. A very convenient aspect, because when one has missed a certain session, one doesn't miss out on all of the information.

Weblink: http://med.kuleuven.be/pentalfa/index_en.php

6. Conclusion

The presented examples of good practices illustrate the potential of LLL that exemplify how institutions of higher education can develop successful LLL opportunities, in a variety of forms, and across traditional disciplinary fields. They are representatives of the variety of LLL experiences that can be offered, but with a particular emphasis on the still underdeveloped non-formal and informal forms of learning. What is more, they show us how LLL can effectively answer market demands with flexible learning offers, that not only take into account the identified success factors for organizing LLL around three main areas: content, pedagogical delivery, and organizational issues; but are also tailored to the demands of a particular societal necessity.



Business models for lifelong learning

by Martin Watkinson

Executive summary

This paper provides examples of successful business models for lifelong learning that have been adopted by distance teaching universities and by other universities in Europe that use distance teaching methodologies.

It reveals that success in developing lifelong learning programmes depends on an ability to identify demand correctly and scope its size, to develop provision that effectively addresses customer needs, and to generate income from public funding (where it is available) and from fees (where they can be charged) that fully covers the cost of provision.

It also reveals, however, that different market conditions require different approaches. The examples that are given here demonstrate a rich diversity of provision in terms of learning objectives and learning outcomes (from formal through non-formal to informal learning) as well as delivery styles (from wholly face-to-face teaching at one extreme to wholly online teaching at another) and scale (from the many, high volume courses offered by the large distance teaching institutions to the smaller, face to face courses offered by mixed mode universities). They also reveal an appetite for innovation and experimentation, as universities search constantly for better ways to use new and existing pedagogy and media to address the changing expectations and requirements of a rapidly growing market in lifelong learning.

1. Introduction

Few universities are concerned only with the education of young, full-time students in residential settings. Many also teach mature, part-time learners who study on campus, at home or in the workplace. In order to meet the different needs and circumstances of full-time and part-time learners, universities have developed a variety of courses and programmes with very different objectives and outcomes and delivery styles. They may be characterised in a number of different ways.

First, programmes and courses have different objectives and learning outcomes. They range across a spectrum from formal through non-formal to informal learning, defined as follows:

- Formal learning: structured periods of learning with evaluative assessment that enables students to earn credits towards recognised awards and qualifications; examples include modular courses taught and assessed by universities which can be counted towards undergraduate or postgraduate degrees and diplomas.
- Non-formal learning: structured periods of learning that may include formative assessment but which do not lead to the award of academic credit; examples include professional development courses which build professional competence;
- Informal learning: loosely structured periods of learning which rarely include assessment and which do not lead to the award of academic credit; examples include



open educational resources developed and made available online by universities to anyone who wishes to study them.

Second, courses and programmes have different delivery styles. They range from wholly face-to-face teaching at one extreme to wholly online teaching at another and with a rich diversity of blended learning in between.

Finally, they differ markedly in size and scale from the many, high volume courses offered by the large distance teaching institutions to the smaller, face-to-face courses offered by mixed mode universities. Between the two extremes there are courses which may be offered in different versions, one to a large generic audience and another, more tailored course, to a smaller niche audience.

Examples of these different approaches are described below and indexed at the end.

2. BELGIUM: KATHOLIEKE UNIVERSITEIT LEUVEN

2.1 Formal learning in a conventional setting: studying philosophy in the evening

KU Leuven offer a face-to-face evening programme on philosophical reflection that forms part of a bachelor's degree in philosophy. However, it can also be studied as a secondary course by undergraduate students majoring in other disciplines and it can be studied as a free-standing, general interest evening course by part-time students who may be in work or retired. In this form, this evening programme responds to a societal demand for philosophical reflection and interpretation.

The evening programme uses face-to-face teaching rather than distance education. This enables students not only to meet and interact with university teachers but also with fellow students.

The evening programme is part of the University's standard curriculum. Evening students follow the same education programmes and study components and are subject to the same exam requirements and the same rules and regulations. However, not all evening students are experienced learners and drop-out rates are high. The University is therefore providing a number of additional services to improve the learning environment of its part-time learners including the creation of a digital learning environment and an online community, the provision of advice and guidance, flexible exam scheduling, individual tutoring and a limited number of introductory philosophy courses.

The programme began in 2007-08. Thirty students are registered in the degree programme and about 55 students are studying for credit.

Fees for the intensive bachelor (4 year) programme are € 313.8 per year and for the individual courses is € 61.8 + € 8.4 per credit.

2.2 Non-formal learning through video-conferencing: the Pentalfa programme

The Pentalfa programme is a multidisciplinary, interactive distance learning, postgraduate programme for medical professionals working in Flanders.



The programme consists of 25 sessions every academic year. They are held on a Thursday night at the Faculty of Medicine of the K.U.Leuven but are relayed by videoconference to five other centres, one in each of the five provinces of Leuven. A session lasts 2.5 hrs. During each session four or five guest speakers, each of them specialists in their own discipline, give a presentation. This is followed by discussions between the speakers and the participants in the different locations. The discussions are co-coordinated by a central moderator in Leuven, who usually also coordinates the scientific content of the session, and by a moderator at each site. The participants follow the proceedings through two video screens embedded in one, one showing the speaker, the other showing the audience. Another screen shows visual aids such as PowerPoint presentations, graphs or movie fragments. The whole session can later be reviewed through streaming or podcast at home.

The programme is designed for doctors and other experts from the public health sector. The sessions' subjects are very broad; from acute allergic reactions of children or complications in breast cancer therapy to malnutrition in hospital. A rotation system defines which hospitals take part in which sessions. The programme is organized and quality assured by a group comprising representatives of the K.U.Leuven and the participating hospitals of the Flemish hospital network.

The Pentalfa programme started in 1998 as an initiative of the Faculty of Medicine and was extended later in cooperation with the Flemish hospital network. Nearly 45,000 people took part in 253 sessions during the ten first years (October 1998-May 2008), an average of 178 per session. The programme has been a success because participants can take part close to their place of work using video-conferencing and do not therefore have to waste time and money in travelling to K.U.Leuven. Almost 85% of the participants at guest sites said that they would not come to the University for the specific seminar that they participated in.

The total cost of the programme per year is approximately € 330,105. This consists of personnel costs in Leuven and at each site, communication costs, depreciation of technical equipment in Leuven and at guest sites, promotion costs, and other expenses. The cost is paid by the participating sites of the Flemish Hospital Network and the faculty of medicine of the K.U.Leuven.

No fee is charged. The net benefit from a societal point of view is estimated as € 501,626 per year. This takes account of cost and time savings for transportation for each participant.

3. DENMARK: AARHUS UNIVERSITY (DAOU)

3.1 Formal learning: a Masters programme in ICT and Learning (MIL)

Aarhus University seeks to develop new programmes and courses in areas where the university has strong and growing demand from full time campus-based students and where there are perceived gaps in the market. They are mostly at MA-level.

Masters programmes in Denmark have to be approved by a national accreditation board attached to the government. In order to be approved, the University has to undertake a market analysis and to demonstrate positive support from the labour unions, public and private employers.



The University has decided 'to offer the best and most attractive continuing and further education programmes to both Bachelor's degree and Master's degree graduates', and to maintain that contact with the graduates via an alumni network.

The 'Master of ICT and Learning (MIL) MIL is a two-year, part-time masters programme with two semesters per year. It is the most successful Danish masters programme offered within the alternative adult educational system.

The programme aims to give students a theoretical, analytical, methodological and design-related competence in the relationship between ICT and learning and prepares them to develop, implement and evaluate ICT-supported learning processes in different contexts. It is aimed at graduates wishing to build on their academic qualifications and work experience and who are looking to develop their careers as policy makers, human resource developers, software developers, and educators.

The programme is offered on a national level as a collaboration between 5 institutions: Aalborg University, Aarhus University, Copenhagen Business School, The Danish University of Education and Roskilde University Centre. The teaching is performed by highly qualified postgraduate students and professors from one of the five participating institutions. In addition, guest lecturers from Danish and foreign educational institutions, as well as representatives from the business world, contribute to the teaching.

Admission to the Master Programme in ICT and Learning requires a relevant bachelor degree (180 ECTS points) in a relevant topic and a minimum of 2 years of relevant working experience. The programme has been running since 2002 and attracts between 45 and 60 students a year.

For Danish and EU/EEC citizens, the tuition fee is DKK 15.000 (€ 2014) per semester or DKK 7.500 (€ 1007) per module. For other citizens, the tuition fee is DKK 23.125 (€ 3104) per semester and 11.562 DKK (€ 503.5) per module. The fee covers expenses for tuition (1 or 2 face-to-face seminars per semester and elearning support) and up to three attempts at passing the exam. Tuition fees for the university's continuing education courses are not subject to VAT, and do not include expenses for educational materials.

In addition to the fee, the University receives a Government subsidy. The level of the subsidy for part-time education is determined by the annual budget/Finance Act. The grant is paid to the university when the fee is paid and is not dependent on the performance of the student.

Costs for developing new programmes and course have to be paid by the university. Consequently the preliminary investment in new programmes and courses are kept to a minimum until the first group of students have registered.

3.2 Informal learning: media and museums

The University's strategy states that 'the communication of research-based knowledge to citizens, politicians and key sectors of society must be qualified and intensified in a wide range of media and by strengthening the university's museum environment'.

The University encourages academic staff to participate in the public debate in the media and with



presentations for the general public through newspapers, periodicals, radio and television programmes. The University also runs, or is closely associated with, several museums in the country and academic staff are encouraged to contribute to exhibitions within their fields.

Academic staff at the university also undertake teaching for a small extra honorarium for the Danish Folk University which offers lectures and short courses as non-formal education.

4. GERMANY: FERNUNIVERSITÄT IN HAGEN

At FernUniversität, there are several ways to initiate a new programme or course. The determining factors for introducing a new degree program are:

- Whether the university's resources are sufficient to successfully establish the programme (most significantly, academic staff);
- Whether the programme is in line with the university's development plan;
- For continuing education programmes and courses (including Master programmes that require postgraduate work experience [weiterbildend]), whether the market demand is sufficient to make the programmes financially independent and self-supporting.

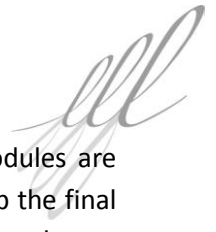
The academic staff of a particular academic field may organize hearings and/or formal and informal talks with professional and academic associations to determine the need for a specific new programme. Alternatively, an organization or business association of a particular field may suggest a particular offer to the department. Academic staff may also recognise a growing demand for a specific offer in student counseling and design a new programme/module/course in response to that market demand.

The concept of the new programme or course has to be outlined with regard to content, financing, and academic resources and presented to the presidential board. After a new program or degree has been implemented, the university closely monitors the success of the module/course or program to ascertain the market demand for these specific areas. A primary factor determining the success of a program is the number of students. If a module or program is not successful, meaning the number of participating students is low, the program or course will be discontinued. The academic quality of a degree programme is evaluated and improved in the extensive accreditation and re-accreditation processes, which take into account scholarly quality, internationalization, and research- or professional orientation.

4.1 Formal learning: the Bachelor of Laws degree programme

Students at FernUniversität can choose between full-time and part-time study to reach their educational goals. They follow the blended learning principle and are offered a choice of different types of programmes, ranging from studying a single course module with certificate, to completion of a degree.

The Bachelor of Laws (L.L.B.) degree programme is a distance learning course which is specifically designed to meet the demands of the business sectors for graduates trained in juridical expertise.



The programme consists of 21 modules which are taken over seven semesters. 16 modules are mandatory, three can be freely chosen from a pool of modules and two modules make up the final exam. There are also three mandatory on-campus sessions in Hagen. Although the degree programme focuses on German law, it also includes sections on European law and on economics.

Studying at FernUniversität enables lifelong learning and (further) qualification. Depending on their personal needs and circumstances, students can choose between full-time and part-time study to reach their educational goals. They follow the blended learning principle and are offered a choice of different types of programmes, ranging from studying a single course or module with certificate, or a target group-specific continuing education course up to completion of a degree. By offering the opportunity for extra-occupational study, FernUniversität plays an important role in educational policy in the context of fostering lifelong learning. Depending on individual needs, students achieve their personal educational goals by selecting from different packages, ranging from studying a single course module with certificate, to completion of a degree.

FernUniversität is building on its strength as a provider of flexible, extra-occupational and occupation-related programmes into continuing education, thus offering opportunities for different target groups. It supports autonomous learning processes as well as media competence.

An advisory board, consisting of external stakeholders from the business sectors, continually monitors the programme and advises on updates and changes as well as promotes the programme in its business areas.

The programme attracted 394 students when it was first launched in 2003/04. There were 5,019 students on the summer semester in 2009. Currently, plans are under way to make the programme even more attractive by offering more online-support for exam preparation, providing course materials in new formats such as e-book and i-tunes, and by establishing an international guest professorship.

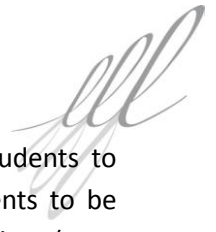
Together with the distance universities Open Universiteit Nederland and UNED Spain, the faculty of law organizes an annual ERASMUS summer school which took place in Maastricht, the Netherlands, in July 2009 and will be held in Hagen in 2010. Due to its popularity, the faculty plans to continue the program with its partners in 2011.

As in other public universities in Germany, students are not required to pay a tuition fee. They do, however, pay a small administrative fee per semester and pay also for the delivery of every course material package. These fees total € 2500 for the whole degree programme.

4.2 Formal learning through distance education: the Interdisciplinary Distance Learning Programme for Environmental Sciences (infernium)

The Interdisciplinary Distance Learning Programme for Environmental Sciences (infernium) is an innovative programme of environmentally related further education. Modules from the programme can be counted towards a Master of Science degree, to University credentials, or to a Certificate.

The programme comprises 26 distance teaching modules and consists of a mix of different teaching and learning forms (textbooks, multimedia CD-ROMs, virtual learning environments on the internet, residential seminars, excursions). The virtual learning environment offers the course materials as



PDF files, as well as additional information for individual modules. A forum allows students to discuss issues related to their studies or to current events. The server allows documents to be edited collaboratively over the Internet. Seven of the modules include an on-campus seminar (two- to three-day). Residential seminars usually take place once a year.

Students can create their own individual study programme according to their background and interests. The weekly workload is about 15 to 20 hours for a four-semester course but students may study for more or fewer than four semesters. If necessary, students may also put their studies on hold by enrolling in a semester without registering for any modules.

The programme is targeted primarily at professionals of all disciplines who would like to acquire environmental expertise to supplement their first university or college degree. Some 425 students are registered in the programme in 2009.

The programme is jointly offered and supported by the FernUniversität in Hagen and the Fraunhofer Institute for Environmental, Safety and Energy Technology (UMSICHT) in Oberhausen (Germany). In 2005 a further partnership began with the Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy in the fields of systems analysis, mobility and sustainability policy and the programme is also pioneering a virtual mobility project with the Open Universiteit Nederland in fall 2009. Students are able to register for two selected courses from the respective partner university.

Students are only required to pay the fees for the modules and examinations they take in each semester and the semester tuition fee. The fees are € 390.00 per module, € 390.00 for the supervised term paper, € 1,050.00 for the supervised master's thesis and oral exam, € 100.00 for repeating an assignment that was not completed successfully, and € 100.00 tuition fees per semester

In terms of the academic effort required for each qualification, the total costs are € 5730.00 for the master's degree, plus semester fee and € 4680.00,- for the university credential, plus semester fee.

4.3 Non-formal learning: open access studies

Anyone may enroll for courses and modules in the BA/MA-system independent of his/her educational background. Learners register for the course, pay for the study material, and are eligible for tutoring. They receive a certificate for their successful attendance of the specific course or module. If the individual learner eventually intends to get credits but does not have the university entrance qualification, s/he is required to take a qualification exam.

Students pay fees to cover the costs of providing and delivering the study materials but otherwise all costs are covered by federal state funding.

4.4 Non-formal learning: continuing education courses

The FernUniversität also offers a number of continuing education and training courses for specific target groups in particular professional fields, such as law, engineering, psychology, health and medical fields, sociology, and economics. These include courses or modules in Medical Ethics, TZI-Theme-Focused Interaction (sociology and psychology), Bar Rules and Legal Practice, and Environmental Sciences. All of these qualify the student for a certificate or some other form of



formal accreditation and require previous postgraduate work and/or professional experience in specific areas.

The costs of continuing education courses are entirely met from student fees.

5. ITALY: INTERNATIONAL TELEMATIC UNIVERSITY (UNINETTUNO)

5.1 Formal learning through distance education: Master's course for Football Athletic Trainers

Courses at the International Telematic University (UNINETTUNO) include degree and post-graduate courses, vocational training and retraining courses, computer literacy courses and literacy courses for several languages.

A distance taught, master's course for Football Athletic Trainers is offered by UNINETTUNO in cooperation with IUSM.

It enables students anywhere in Italy to study the training techniques adopted by Professor Valter Di Salvo with the Manchester United team. The course consists of 8 live video-conferences in which Professor Di Salvo, and other experts, deliver multimedia lectures and engage in interactive questions and answers sessions with the students. The video-lessons are supported by related training materials,

The course has been running since May 2007. The number of participants for 2008 academic year is 18. The course generates income of € 59,000 and costs € 52,000.

5.2 Informal learning through video lessons: the Arab Language Literacy Programme

An example from Uninettuno is the course titled "I Learn Arabic-The Treasure of the Letters". It includes 4 texts and 150 video lessons which are carried on television but are also available in cassette format. The TV programmes are broadcast by the public Morocco Television at dinner time, reaching the largest number of people at the moment they return from work.

The course is addressed to the illiterate adult population and more specifically the most isolated rural areas and to the female population whose illiteracy rate is very high. Its aim is to train for the skills required for an active comprehension of language, for the use of writing and reading. The course is funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and no fees are charged.

6. THE NETHERLANDS: OPEN UNIVERSITEIT

6.1 Formal learning through online education and work experience: Virtual Environmental Consultancy (VEC)

The Virtual Environmental Consultancy (VEC) is a module (final thesis project) within the Bachelor of Science degree.

The VEC offers a networked learning environment that resembles an authentic professional situation. In the course the students work on authentic research tasks provided by real external



clients and produce final reports for the clients. It thus enables students to gain firsthand experience of online working by entering online working situations and obtaining a true working experience. In this way, learning and work experience have been fully integrated in a distance learning environment.

The module involves two parallel processes, one focussing on professional development (real-life work experience and professional practice) and the other focussing on personal development (student-centred learning and competence development). The professional development process is directed to delivering high quality products to the external clients, in according to both the client's needs and to the academic quality conditions of the university-based company. The personal development scheme is devoted to the enhancement of academic and professional competences of the individual student employees.

Although the VEC was specifically developed to support learning and work experiences in distance education, over the past years the VEC has also been used as a module in conventional academic programmes with daytime students. The characteristics of the VEC, like the remote internships, online team collaboration and the VEC company electronic project environment supports asynchronous networked collaboration, personally fitted to the individual needs of each student.

The course started in 1988 with a pilot run of the course with 14 participants. After evaluation and some redesign the course runs now mostly twice each year with an average number of 21 participants each year. It counts for 30.1 EC in two project tracks (12.9 EC & 17.2 EC).

The cost of the VEC thesis module is € 1855 (30.1 EC). Depending on their former HE experience, students study one or two project tracks (the student fee for a project track of 12.9 EC = € 795)

6.2 Informal learning: open educational resources

Over the period 2006-2008, OUNL conducted an experiment in which Open Educational Resources (OER) were offered in an effort to bridge the gap between informal and formal learning and to establish a new style of entry portal to higher education with no barriers at all. This followed a recommendation of The Dutch Education Council, an advisory body to the Government, that higher education should be made more accessible for non-traditional groups (i.e. employed and unemployed people) by extending opportunities for lifelong learning based through, amongst other options, an e-learning approach.

The project was planned to deliver at least 16 courses, each with a study load of 25 hours (is about 1 European Credit). At the end of the experiment 24 courses were available online. The format in which the courses are delivered ranges from text only (in downloadable PDF-files) to fully web-based and highly interactive (e.g. games). Some courses include a video podcast of a presentation and a study guide for a book.

All OpenER courses are positioned as informal learning courses, but at the same time lifelong learners can take exams for several courses. Five courses can be completed by a formal examination, which - if successful - leads to a certificate. This service costs € 50,- for a user. About 85 learners applied for a formal examination.



At this moment OpenER still functions and attracts about 800 unique visitors per day. About 10% of visitors report that OER influenced their decision to start some formal learning track at academic level. The plan is to integrate it into a broader OER-strategy of the OUNL.

Costs for creation of the material ranged from € 3000 (for a course derived from an existing regular OUNL course, delivered as PDF-files) to € 30,000 (for the game). Funding of € 660,000 was received in grants from the Dutch Government and from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

7. PORTUGAL: UNIVERSIDADE ABERTA

7.1 Formal learning: on-the-job training course for teachers

All courses provided by the Universidade Aberta's Unit for Lifelong Learning lead to recognised diplomas and qualifications. They are developed in response to market information collected from the University's Local Learning Centres.

The On-the-job Training Course (OTC) enables teachers working in basic and secondary levels to obtain a professional certificate of teaching whilst continuing in employment.

The course lasts two semesters. The first semester is preceded by an entirely online module that lasts 2 weeks. Further modules are taken that together total 40 ECTS. Priority is given to asynchronous communication so that communication and interaction, between tutor and student, students and resources, can take place at the student's convenience.

The course arises from a collaboration between Universidade Aberta and the Union of Teachers of Lisbon Region (SPGL, Sindicato dos Professores da Grande Lisboa), and is recognized by the Ministry of Education and officially credited for professional progression.

The course has been running since April 2009. In the first semester, 466 teachers from all over the country enrolled on the course, representing almost 40% of unqualified teachers. A second presentation is planned for 2009-10.

Fees charged for the On-the-job Training Course include a registration fee of € 90, a tuition fee for each curricular unit of € 120 and € 100 for the certificate. The fees collected from students cover the costs of the course. No government or other external funding is currently available for lifelong learning.

8. RUSSIAN FEDERATION: MOSCOW STATE UNIVERSITY FOR ECONOMICS, STATISTICS AND INFORMATICS (MESI)

Lifelong training programmes at MESI take three forms: off-the-job (full-time) training; mixed full-time and part-time training; on-the-job (part-time) training.

Key LLL target groups and corresponding types of education comprise: adults with secondary general and secondary vocational education for whom MESI provides pre-study courses, programs of first higher professional education and short-term programs of general additional education;



adults with a higher professional education for whom MESI provides postgraduate and doctoral courses, programs of second higher education, and short-term programs of general additional education; and mid-level and top managers for whom MESI provides programs of further professional education. Courses are flexible, modular, and adopt a multimedia approach to learning.

8.1 Formal learning through distance education: first and second degrees

Most lifelong learning students in MESI take online external studies. In September 2009 there were 130,350 part-time LLL students on online external studies programmes. 73% were studying for their first degree and 27% for their second degree.

Students can study courses in a wide range of subjects including Accounting, Commerce, Marketing, Management, Economics, Applied informatics, Statistics, Finance and Law. There are between 50 and 60 modules to choose from.

The external students have online lecturing and support, including through web 2.0, receive sets of printed materials and have face-to-face sessions in Moscow and in 33 branches and more than 200 representative offices of MESI throughout the country – from Vladivostok to Kaliningrad. Students take electronic tests and final national certification is performed by video-conferences.

Students pay the equivalent of € 30 to € 60 for one module, up to € 1800 for a full year and a maximum of € 3000 or € 3600 for the whole programme. Students transferring credits from previous studies pay less.

8.2 Formal learning: programmes of additional professional education

For the last 5 years MESI has conducted 53 programs of further training and 37 programs of professional retraining for LLL students. About 1000 students study such programs each year.

Further training is offered in areas of high demand including accounting and taxation, crisis management, information and communication technologies in the teaching process, modern marketing and others. Students receive a National Certificate for 72 – 500 academic hours of short-term further training.

Professional retraining is available in a wide range of subjects including banking, marketing, management and so on. Students receive a state-recognized certificate for over 500 hours of study.

MESI also designs special programs of additional professional education on request. For example, it delivers training in financial and business management, accountancy and insurance for administrative and professional staff of the Russian Federation.

The cost of a programme of additional professional education varies from € 1000 to € 8000, though sometimes employers sponsor the studies of their employees.



8.3 Formal learning: postgraduate programmes

Postgraduate and doctoral programs of MESI are designed for the professional development of specialists in the sciences and social sciences. About 700 students are studying at these levels. The cost of a full MBA program is € 11,000.

8.4 Non-formal learning: short courses

MESI runs special short courses on ICT in education for school teachers. About 300 teachers take the courses each year and are awarded with certificates of participation (non-academic). There is a strong need for such additional education as Russian schools are well equipped with ICT but the level of skills in their proper use in teaching/learning process is still poor. The courses have been designed by MESI at the request of the Moscow Department of Education. Their delivery is co-funded by Moscow Department of Education and MESI.

8.5 Non-formal learning: workshops and conferences

In co-operation with many companies (e.g. Cisco Systems, Microsoft, e@Learning Centre and others) MESI and some of its branches regularly organize open workshops for all comers, mostly on ICT in education but also on marketing, general and strategic management, human resource development, etc. They may be free of charge or have low fees, and provide the attendees with non-academic certificates or not.

On a regular basis MESI holds and hosts open All-Russian conferences the core themes of which are e-learning (free of charge), innovation and re-engineering (with low fees).

MESI also organizes 'A Week of R&D' in its headquarters in Moscow every year and three times a year in its different branches (e.g. in Kaliningrad, Kemerovo, Nizhny Novgorod, Minsk, Ryasan, Tver, Yaroslavl). The last ones are organized in cooperation with regional authorities, including Departments of Education, and are aimed at the development of human resources, new technologies and innovation. Each time the programme is specially shaped in compliance with regional needs but typically includes conferences, seminars, workshops, round table discussions, presentations and demonstrations. The average number of participants is 200, and they are awarded with non-academic certificates.

8.6 Informal learning: open educational resources

MESI offers its open courses via its portal for free, without matriculation and any certificate. Yearly about one thousand learners take the courses on-line. The most popular courses are related to management, marketing and HRD.

9. SPAIN: UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE EDUCACION A DISTANCIA (UNED)

9.1 Formal learning: postgraduate courses

Besides the official and regular degrees offered by UNED (undergraduate studies: diplomatura, ingenieria tecnica (3 years), licenciatura, ingenieria superior (5 years), official postgraduate and doctoral studies: doctorado, master oficial), the University offers a number of other awards as part



of its continuous education programmes. These include postgraduate studies (masters, specialist and expert programmes and teacher training programmes), actualization of knowledge studies (open training and professional development programmes), and training in the area of health.

UNED also offer distance education programmes aimed at promoting the learning of the official languages in Spain (Spanish, Catalan, Basque, Galician) and foreign languages. UNED offers these programmes through a specific Distance Language Education Center (CUID: Centro Universitario de Idiomas a Distancia)

Courses, and especially official postgraduate courses, are developed in response to market research conducted through online questionnaires to undergraduate students, former students, tutors and employers. This helps to determine the area of study, the content of the course and the preferred method of learning.

Funding is provided by national government general grant, as well as specific grants from the regional centers. The latter vary depending on the region and on the courses. Some programmes may get extra funding or scholarships from private institutions, enterprises, foundations, etc. Student fees cover the extra costs of course production and presentation, collaborating professors, text and other materials, etc.

9.2 Non-formal learning: short courses

UNED also offer courses for which students receive certificates of participation but not academic credit. These include courses in the University extension programme - face to face short courses, seminars, congresses, etc. presented in different locations in Spain (UNED regional centers or faculties) throughout the year, and Summer courses - face to face short courses and workshops in UNED regional centers in June, July, August, September. The University also runs face to face courses for people over 55 years (UNED Senior).

Decisions as to which courses to present are usually informed by a training demand expressed to the Regional Centers (UNED support institutions located in different towns in Spain and abroad and with the task, among others, of enriching the cultural activity in the region). Costs are covered by UNED and government grant and tuition fees and, in some cases, extra financing by regional governments, private institutions, foundations, trade unions, etc.

9.3 Informal learning: open educational resources

UNED also makes some of its courses available on its website as Open Course Ware. Students can study these materials for free. There is no registration, no deadlines and no award.

In addition, the University runs a reading club to promote reading and the exchange of opinions, etc. about suggested authors and readings.

10. SWEDEN: LUND UNIVERSITY

10.1 Informal learning through conventional teaching: Child Rights, Classroom and School Management



Child Rights, Classroom and School Management is an advanced international training programme offered on behalf of SIDA (The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) by Lund University Commissioned Education (LUCE). Commissioned education such as this (ie courses designed for and delivered to a paying firm or organization) is a fairly common mode of education in Sweden, especially in health care, engineering and teacher training.

The programme is intended to train change managers in the education system in developing countries. The content has been developed by SIDA working with stakeholders in the participating countries. Participants are drawn from countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America and must be approved by an official nominating authority in their home country. The maximum numbers of participants per programme session are 30. The academic level is not formally set but the participants are expected to have a BSc or similar as background, including communication skills in English. Those who complete the programme are awarded a certificate, but receive no academic credits.

The programme receives financial support from the Swedish government as part of its contribution to UN development goals. SIDA cover most of the costs involved for the participants, including accommodation and travel costs.

At Swedish universities there is very little non-formal education or training. This type of education has by tradition been offered by the adult education institutions in Sweden, institutions for which Sweden is very famous. If found at a Swedish university, however, non-formal education is mostly in the form of an open seminar.

11. SWITZERLAND: FERNSTUDIEN SCHWEIZ

11.1 Formal learning: double Bachelor in Economics

Introduced in 2006/2007, this undergraduate degree programme in economics leads to a double degree, one French and the other Swiss. Like other courses, it was developed in response to market analysis and direct requests from third parties.

It uses blended learning supported by a mentoring and tutoring system, and offers flexibility in time and in space. It uses both Swiss and French specific content and is strongly connected to the economics of both countries, enabling students to manage the interaction between the economic environment and the enterprises in which they are working. It has 79 students this year.

The costs are covered by government grant and student fees in the proportion 66:33.

11.2 Non-formal learning: continuing education programmes

Fernstudien Schweiz offers continuing education programmes in French and German in subjects such as company management and computing, psychology and economics. In some cases they are aimed at specific groups, such as those working in public relations or in consular offices.

Continuing education courses are self-financing through student fees.



12. TURKEY: ANADOLU UNIVERSITY

Anadolu University provides LLL opportunities through both conventional, on-campus teaching and distance education. In both cases, it makes significant use of information and communication technologies to create flexible, high quality learner-centred degree and certificate programs.

12.1 Formal learning: Associate and Bachelor Degree Programmes

Distance learning students in Turkey can study 42 associate and 12 bachelor degrees in three faculties – Open Education, Economics and Business Administration. These include a wide range of subjects from public finance and administration to philosophy and sociology. Four associate and 3 bachelor degree programs are also offered to Turkish citizens living in 16 Western European countries.

The programmes are studied by a total of around 1,200,000 students. They are open to people of all ages, including young people who cannot study at conventional universities due to limited student quotas.

In addition to the above, Anadolu runs 'Second University' which provides an opportunity for students and graduates of two and four year on-campus programs to apply for the distance education programs without the requirement to take the university entrance exam. The programs they apply for must be different from the fields they study at or have graduated from. Some 72,000 students were studying in this way in the 2008-2009 academic year.

Occupational Training Programs are also run in conjunction with a number of Turkish Ministries such as the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health. These programmes are at associate degree level and offer opportunities for vocational training and professional development of teachers, the armed forces, the police and health workers. The total number of students at these programs for the 2008-2009 academic year is 37,310.

12.2 Non-formal learning: e-Certificate programmes

The University also runs internet based e-Certificate programs for public and private institutions such as banks and the Ministry of National Education. The courses currently cover accounting, marketing, entrepreneurship, finance and education and are offered three times a year. It takes a participant three months to complete a program. There are currently 25 programs with just under 1,000 students and the number is increasing each year.

12.3 Informal learning: open educational resources

Open educational resources are offered free and online through the Yunus Emre Newage Learning Portal. It includes all distance education learning materials of the University and is open via the portal to anyone interested. The portal has 163 courses under 20 categories and has been operational since January 2008.



The University is also involved in civic engagement projects and services such as training and seminars open to the public.

13. UNITED KINGDOM: THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

All awards, courses and packs at the OU are required to complete an approvals process which comprises a number of stages. As part of this process, proposers are asked to provide evidence that their award or course will attract students and that it will widen participation. Questions include:

- What relevant factors or trends can be identified which point to a need for this type of offering?
- What evidence do you have available (for instance, from existing market research in your Unit or elsewhere in the University) indicating this course will attract students on an appropriate scale?
- Describe the target students at the heart of this proposal and how they will benefit from a well implemented market offer. What is the size of the market?
- What assumptions have been made about the future learning needs of these students? Is there an opportunity to develop extended 'lifelong learning' relationships with any/all of them?
- How will this course attract students from under-represented groups to study with the University?
- Would the course help your Faculty or School to expand its portfolio of offerings, or to extend its markets, or both?
- Would the course enable you to engage with the requirements of employers? State what makes the proposal attractive to employers and identify which, if any, of the target groups will attract sponsorship by employers.
- If the course will attract any form of formal accreditation, badging or kite-marking critical to the target market, please outline any formal accreditation arrangements.
- Are there any timing issues for this market opportunity? E.g. a critical launch window or a limited period of anticipated student/customer need.
- What is unique or innovative about the course from a student's point of view? Why would he or she want to study it?
- Is there a significant and defined competition in the target markets? If so, give examples of competitor offerings which may be in the same area or similar to the proposed project. What are our main strengths in relation to our competitors? Where relevant please cross refer to your competitor analysis to show how the suggested fee level compares with competitors prices.
- Will the proposed course be available in territories other than the UK, Ireland and Continental Western Europe? Could its content 'travel' in planned or amended form, or are there any cultural factors that could limit its ability to do so?

Answers to the above questions are often prepared in co-operation with the OU's Marketing and Sales Division which may undertake desk research or commission new market research, especially when there is a need to establish demand for new curriculum areas.



13.1 Formal learning: a supported APEL course

The UK Open University (OU) offers a range of first degree course in distance learning format, many of which are in vocational subjects. Increasingly, they seek to recognize that some students who are starting these degrees already have relevant work experience.

Consequently, students wishing to obtain a professional qualification in a professional area such as education, health, social care and management can often start in one of two ways. The first is to study a standard Open University course. The other is to study a short course that awards credit for a student's previous 'experiential learning'. The latter course is designed for people who are already practitioners in the field and who have acquired relevant knowledge and experience through their work.

For example, in studying for a professional qualification in Working with Young People, students can start either with course E131 Introduction to Working with Young People or with EZL131 Introduction to Working with Young People: supported APEL route. Both courses cover the same ground. They are both 30 point courses at OU level 1. They both introduce key principles and ideas underpinning work with young people – particularly aged 13–19. Students examine the nature and scope of this work, its underpinning values and purposes, the roles and responsibilities of practitioners, and the practical and ethical issues they face. They both make significant use of course books, a DVD-ROM, a course reader and a course website.

However, whereas the first course (E131) lasts for nine months and includes tutorials, written assignments and a final course essay, the second course (EZL131) lasts only four months, includes no tutorials, and has just two formative assignments and a final course essay. This is because the second course is designed specifically for students with substantial recent experience of working with young people and substantial knowledge of the theoretical basis of this type of work. It is assumed therefore that they need less support than other students. Guidance is available to help students judge whether their knowledge and experience is sufficient. If in doubt, students are strongly recommended to enrol instead on E131.

Both courses contribute 30 points towards a Certificate (90 points), a Diploma (120 points), a foundation degree (240 points) or a BA Hons Degree (360 points) in Working with Young People. However, to qualify for any one of these awards students will need next to study a work-based learning course in which they are required to work directly with young people in an appropriate setting for a minimum of five hours a week. Since this is a work-based learning course, students need permission from their employer to use their work activities as part of the course and to appoint an appropriately qualified person(s) from within the organisation or elsewhere to act as an observer and supervisor.

The awards in Working with Young People have been recognised, or are expected to be recognised, as professional qualifications for those wishing to be employed in youth work in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

As noted above, supported APEL courses are largely confined to level 1 courses counting towards awards in education, health, social care and management. E131 was first presented in October



2005 and had 361 students on its October 2008 presentation. EZL131 has been running since February 2007 and had 55 students for its February 2009 presentation.

Both courses draw income from public funds and from student fees. On average, public funds pay for the development and production costs of the course. Student fees pay for the presentation costs. The fee for E131 is £ 360 and for EZL131 is £ 330.

13.2 Informal learning: open educational resources

The Open University (OU) gives free online access to a selection of high quality open educational resources through its OpenLearn website (www.open.ac.uk/openlearn). This covers a range of subject areas from access to postgraduate level and contains over 5,000 learning hours of content from OU courses.

OpenLearn is for anyone who wants to learn, whatever their educational needs and experience. The resources can be studied by both individual learners and by organised or self-organising groups and are quality assured by The Open University. Key features include:

- units of between 3 – 15 hours of study time on specific topics, the equivalent of an evening's through to a week's work;
- learning outcomes for each unit and self-assessment activities;
- suggested learning pathways, although learners remain free to organise their study to suit their own needs;
- discussion forums to enable learners to engage with peers, a personal portfolio to keep track of ideas and resources, and blogging tools to publish thoughts.

A range of learning support and social networking tools have been incorporated into OpenLearn to replicate the different informal modes of communication and learning that happen on a traditional campus. Therefore, as well as studying and accessing particular areas of knowledge and educational expertise, learners are able to join discussion forums, write blogs, and contribute to wikis along with their peers. It is still necessary for learners to register for a course if they want to become Open University students and have the support of a tutor, sit exams and gain qualifications.

These resources are not only free to learners but educational practitioners can also combine them with material from their own sources under a flexible Creative Commons copyright licence. This enables entirely new courses and learning materials to be created.

The creation of OpenLearn was supported by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and is now funded by the Open University from its own resources.

13.3 Informal learning: open broadcast television programmes

The Open University (OU) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) have worked in partnership since the University was first created in the 1970s. In the early days the BBC co-produced and broadcast television and radio programmes associated with OU courses. Now the OU and the BBC use television and new technologies to inspire a wider general audience to participate in lifelong learning.



Programmes cover arts and history, society, health and education, business and management, and science technology and nature. They are usually designed to:

- appeal to 18-25 year olds, those who are under-represented in Higher Education, and those in the city/business sector;
- provide the stimulus for further study at The Open University;
- be intellectually challenging;
- explore new ways of delivering content and interactivity for the audience - via mobile phones, broadband, red button interactive, online and on demand services;
- stimulate 'local' audiences and provide outreach in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and/or English Regions - e.g. Coast and British Isles: A Natural History;
- reach a 'global' audience within current International priority areas and subjects;
- connect back to the OU's teaching and provide material for courses;
- develop ideas and formats that run over several programmes and series;
- build long-term relationships with existing programmes and series.

The programmes are usually funded by the OU or co-funded by the OU and BBC and/or another organization. OU funded programmes will generally be a series rather than a single programme, with the exception of special events. OU and BBC co-funded programmes provide the University with opportunities to be involved with landmark BBC productions. The University invests funding and provides the resource of an academic with expertise in the subject area of the programme, to work in partnership with the BBC production team.

The OU also develops associated online and, if agreed, other printed materials, and invests in wrap-around learning activities in order to enhance the learning value of the programme to both parties.

The OU and the BBC commission about 25 projects a year. They include major television series such as:

- Charles Darwin and the Tree of Life
- Child of our Time
- The Money Programme
- History of Scotland
- Can Gerry Robinson Fix the NHS?
- Desperate Midwives
- African School; India School; Chinese School; and Syrian School
- The Story of Maths
- The Medieval Mind



14. Conclusion

As these examples illustrate, programmes and courses in lifelong learning take many different forms. Indeed, it is their diversity that is their strength, for what constitutes a successful business model for lifelong learning is an ability not only to identify a market opportunity but also to assess and accommodate the different learning objectives and styles of a diverse group of customers. This often means blending together different learning materials and teaching styles to create provision that is appropriate, relevant and effective for one group of learners but which may need to be adapted and tailored for another group. Moreover, these materials and styles may change over time as new media and new approaches offer more effective ways of delivering successful learning outcomes. The growth of open educational resources in recent years, for example, offers new ways of constructing informal learning programmes for a large international audience but also provides opportunities for constructing highly effective, tailored offerings for distinct groups of students.

In such a complex and rapidly changing market as this, it is important that universities share their knowledge, expertise and resources to meet common objectives. No single university can hope to respond to, and provide for, the many different demands for lifelong learning that exist with the European Community. It is important, therefore, that we work together to develop provision and create business models that draw from and build on proven success.



15. Overview

Formal learning:

- Belgium (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven): Philosophy in the evening
- Denmark (Aarhus University): a Masters programme in ICT and Learning (MIL)
- Germany (FernUniversität in Hagen): The Bachelor of Laws degree and The Interdisciplinary Distance Learning Programme for Environmental Sciences (infernium)
- Italy (International Telematic University UNINETTUNO): Master's course for Football Athletic Trainers
- The Netherlands (Open Universiteit): Virtual Environmental Consultancy
- Portugal (Universidade Aberta): on-the-job training course for teachers
- Russian Federation (Moscow State University for Economics, Statistics and Informatics, MESI): first and second degrees; programmes of additional professional education; and postgraduate programmes
- Spain (Universidad Nacional de Educacion a Distancia, UNED): postgraduate courses
- Switzerland (Fernstudien Schweiz): Double Bachelor in Economics
- Turkey (Anadolu University): Associate and Bachelor degree programmes
- United Kingdom (The Open University): a supported APEL course

Non-formal learning:

- Belgium (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven): the Pentalfa programme
- Germany (FernUniversität in Hagen): Open access studies and continuing education courses
- Russian Federation (Moscow State University for Economics, Statistics and Informatics, MESI): short courses, workshops and conferences
- Spain (Universidad Nacional de Educacion a Distancia, UNED): short courses
- Switzerland (Fernstudien Schweiz): continuing education programmes PTO
- Turkey (Anadolu University): e-Certificate programmes

Informal learning:

- Denmark (Aarhus University, DAOU): media and museums
- Italy (International Telematic University UNINETTUNO): The Arab language literacy programme
- The Netherlands (Open Universiteit): open educational resources
- Russian Federation (Moscow State University for Economics, Statistics and Informatics, MESI): open educational resources
- Spain (Universidad Nacional de Educacion a Distancia, UNED): open educational resources
- Sweden (Lund University): Child Rights, Classroom and School Management
- Turkey (Anadolu University): open educational resources
- United Kingdom (The Open University): open educational resources, open broadcast television programmes



Partner institutions

European Association of Distance Teaching Universities | The Netherlands
Universidade Aberta | Portugal
The Open University | United Kingdom
Open Universiteit | The Netherlands
Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia | Spain
FernUniversität in Hagen | Germany
Anadolu University | Turkey
Università Telematica Internazionale UNINETTUNO | Italy
Linköping University | Sweden
Danish Association of Open Universities | Denmark
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven | Belgium
Lund University | Sweden
Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics and Informatics | Russia
Fernstudien Schweiz | Switzerland



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