Case Study template

A) General Part

General	
Case Study Title	Practice of New Media in ULLL: Workshop "Potentials and Risks of New Media (Internet and Web 2.0)" as an example
DIALOGUE thematic group	New Media
Date of the case study	March 2012
Contact Information	
Name of the institution	University of Graz Center for Continuing Education at the University of Graz
Location/country	Graz, Austria
Size of the organisation/ Number of academic/research and non-academic/administrative staff	University of Graz: 30,000 students; 3,800 staff (incl. 2,600 research/teaching staff)
Website	www.uni-graz.at
Abstract	
Key words	Intergenerational learning, dialogue between researchers and practitioners, New Media
Please provide a short abstract of the case study	A programme of the Center for Continuing Education particularly designed for older learners by using an intergenerational approach is "Vita activa – Bridging generations through learning". Digital literacy has become a crucial competence in our time, necessary for taking part in various societal activities. A growing number of older people uses the Internet (e.g. for shopping or for keeping in contact with younger family members). Many of these users have only basic ICT competences and are not aware of the potentials and/or the dangers of the Internet (Web 2.0). To meet these challenges a more research-led reflective approach is required. This case study describes and analyses a workshop focusing on "Potentials

and Risks of New Media" that was developed and piloted in close cooperation with researchers in the winter term 2010/11.

B) Specific Part

The following part depends on each thematic group, outlining strengths and weaknesses of the chosen situations.

1. Context

Please present the general background ("landscape of experience") of the activity and in which institutions, organisations, units or sectors the case took place.

Institutional context: The goal of the University of Graz is to be a partner in lifelong learning for people of all ages interested in (academic) knowledge, learning and education. The Center for Continuing Education at the University of Graz is responsible for the research-based development and testing of innovative programmes and learning settings for general interest programmes at university level. Furthermore, the Center is responsible for setting up an information center and counselling service on university continuing education; for developing programmes to further competence and increase professionalism of educators/facilitators working in university continuing education; and for building up and maintaining regional, national and European partnerships for programme development, cooperation projects and networks.

Context of the project:
To offer a course on "New Media" in ULLL, a workshop was developed by a team of four: a professor of history specialized in Informatics; an ICT specialist/consultant and lecturer at the Faculty of Humanities; a programme manager (Center for Continuing Education); an academic programme director (Center for Continuing Education).
The curriculum consisted of the following topics:
- Introduction to the topic from the perspective of the humanities and cultural sciences;
- Presentation and practical exploration of selected applications of Web 2.0 in everyday life and academic learning (Blog, Wiki, social networks etc.);
- Most important terms and definitions of the Internet (Spam, Browser, Chat, Avatar, Cyberspace etc.);
- Dangers and risks of the Internet and safety rules;
- Investigation of information and verification of sources in the Internet;
- Active design and production of content.

The workshop consisted of lectures with discussions, demonstrations of applications and practical sessions (learning by doing). Each participant was supplied with a notebook and Internet access (WLAN).

The workshop was held on 2 Friday afternoons und 2 Saturdays (24 teaching units not including the self-learning units).
The workshop was piloted in the winter term 2010/11. 5 women and 3 men participated (age range: 36 to 71).

2. Objectives and Purposes

What are the objectives and purposes of the concrete action?

This activity had two main purposes:
1. to test – via concrete collaboration (= joint course design, delivery and evaluation) – the dialogue between research and practice on "New Media" in ULLL;
2. to improve the media competence of the course students through theoretical inputs and practical sessions.

The workshop addressed adults of all ages with basic ICT skills (Microsoft Word, Microsoft Outlook, Internet Explorer) and, basically, pursued three targets:

1. to give a research-based introduction to the institutional and technological background and history of the Internet and show selected applications (Blog, Wiki, social networks, such as Facebook);
2. to stimulate and support students to explore some of the applications mentioned above by themselves and to discuss the experience made in the group;
3. to test some applications of the Web 2.0 in order to determine whether it would make sense to use them in other Vita activa workshops and in other programmes of the Center for Continuing Education.

3. Combination of research and practice

How does this activity combine insights from research and practical hands-on experience?

The workshop combines insights from research and practice as on the one hand it is research-based and on the other, lectures received training from practitioners to be able to work with intergenerational groups. Furthermore, the academic content was offered in a way, which was suitable for the target groups (e.g. the format of workshops and the time – 2 Friday afternoons und 2 Saturdays).

4. Instruments for implementation

Does the institution/sector/unit provide instruments (e.g. ICT or human resources) for the implementation of the concrete action? Which tools were applied?

The University supplied notebooks and WLAN for each participant.

5. Best practice/ Bad practice:

What kind of results were obtained? What do you consider to be the innovative or interesting part of this concrete action?

What are the barriers (potential and effective) to the full implementation of this action and what are its benefits?

In which sense can this action be useful for DIALOGUE?

Results of dialogue / concrete collaboration between research and practice:

Main focus of dialogue: facilitating adult learning and learning in later life at academic level and on the theme "New Media". The researchers were mainly involved in undergraduate and postgraduate teaching in regular university degree programmes. In the course of the preparation of this workshop, they received support and guidelines for adult learning and learning in later life, especially in "New Media".

Delivery/evaluation: The experts/tutors also benefited from the work with adult learners by receiving feedback from non-traditional learners, which differs from feedback by younger, undergraduate students. They also benefited from working with an adult educator participating in the course as a "facilitator" for adult learning.

Added value: Based on the experiences working with the Center for Continuing Education and this specific project, one of the researchers was encouraged to offer a class on a similar topic in the regular degree programme.

Results of student learning: As for the content, one of the most important lessons learned was the question of safety in the Internet. Whatever one does in the Internet (e.g. posting a comment in a news forum or sending a photo to a friend in Facebook) – it's very likely that it will never disappear completely. Nothing is free in the Web 2.0 because it's always the user who pays with information about himself/herself as a potential customer. As a consequence, much more awareness and learning is still needed in this field. ULLL could contribute accordingly through providing academic learning opportunities of high quality.

Impact on the Center for Continuing Education with respect to the use of "New Media": The staff of the Center benefited through a transfer of knowledge in this field; the Center came to the decision to further explore other social applications which are more appropriate for older learners.

The course clearly showed how important the theme New Media is and that we definitely need to offer learning opportunities on a regular basis.

6. Direct link of researchers and practitioners in this activity

Are researchers and practitioners directly linked in this activity?

- If yes, how are they linked and what are the communication and interaction processes?

- If they do not communicate directly, how are findings from research connected to practical activities and vice versa?

As mentioned above, the workshop was planned in a team of 4 people: a professor of history specialized in Informatics; an ICT specialist/consultant and lecturer at the Faculty of Humanities; a programme manager (Center for Continuing Education); an academic programme director (Center for Continuing Education). "
The dialogue between practitioners and researchers was very purpose-oriented and focused on a concrete outcome (= a successful course and better knowledge for staff on the theme); in most educational institutions, much less time is spent on the development of such a short course; researchers/teachers would simply deliver the course more or less independently. The Center is convinced that the quality of dialogue was necessary to reach a decision on the work of the Center in the area of "New Media" and the future policy and action on this decision; this dialogue is seen as improving the quality of the course.

7. Transferable elements

Which elements would you identify as easily transferable to other institutions in different regional and national contexts?

Intensive dialogue and cooperation between researchers and practitioners (the programme developers from the CEC) is considered to be a transferrable approach for other universities in new courses designs. This cooperation improves the quality of continuing education courses as lectures are trained/briefed about teaching and learning settings for intergenerational groups, which are distinct from usual teaching methods used for undergraduate or graduate courses.

8. Recommendations for dissemination

Briefly identify the most important points in the case study for other ULLL managers and practitioners – these may include risks as well as benefits.

Please formulate some recommendations for the dissemination on the basis of the case study addressed to the working group and other partners.

Dialogue between research and practice:

Concrete collaborative projects (such as joint development of a course) could be an excellent opportunity to have a productive dialogue with researchers respecting each other's needs and to reach a common goal; however, finding common ground is time-consuming. For this reason, it would be helpful to develop written guidelines – in order to overcome potential barriers and to save time in future projects – in which the setting (Learning in Later Life & University of Lifelong Learning) as well as some do's and don'ts are explained to researchers in brief.*

Course on Media competence: Unlike normal computer courses, the focus of this workshop is research-based, thus critical reflection on the use of the Internet and its impact on society form an essential part of the curriculum. To attract more potential participants (ideal number: 12) it's also important to find a title that better distinguishes the course from other (non-academic) ICT courses.
Apart from that, the workshop should be offered in two modules that can be booked separately.

9. Additional information

Please state additional sources like bibliography, website, publications, reports

- Bibliography sources: * Not designed for a particular ULLL context: Internet-SeniorInnenkurse – Leitfaden für TrainerInnen, ed. Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz, Wien 2010. [Internet Courses for Seniors – Guidelines for Tutors, ed. by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection]

- Project material

- Additional material

We are intending to put your case study on the website.

Please tick here ☐ if you do **not** wish to see your case study published on the project's website

Example: New Media TWG. (How to connect virtual and physical space?)

Learning environment:
academic programme director (Center for Continuing Education)

Research on development of new media:
historian specialized in Informatics; ICT specialist/consultant and lecturer

Practice of using new media in LLL:
programme manager & tutor (Center for Contin. Education)

Good practice Description

Research(ers)

Practitioners

How it is possible to realize a DIALOGUE?