



NATIONAL REPORT ON NEW MEDIA AND ICT IN ULLL

Country: Germany

Peter Kossack, University of Potsdam (UP)

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University Lifelong Learning (ULLL) in the national context

The modern history of ULLL in Germany starts with the “Universitätsausdehnungsbewegung” (University expansion movement) in the late 19th and early 20th century (Vogt 2011, 313). The movement was about bridging the gap between the institution university and the people. Target groups have been the bourgeoisie and the working-class. Despite these approaches the significance of ULLL only was of minor importance within the German universities. This seems to change in the context of the Bologna reform and the overall development of higher education in Germany (see e.g. Graeßner 2006). Only a couple of years ago the participation in ULLL in Germany is described as very modest compared with other countries in Europe (Schaeper et al 2006, 124).

Vogt defines the term “wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung” (ULLL) for the German context: ULLL refers to formal or non-formal learning of individuals, who are qualified either through an academic certificate or through their vocational experience. The teachers are highly qualified in an academic sense. The teaching can be characterised as research-based and is aiming to a critical and analytical distance to the learning object (see Vogt 2011, 314). ULLL in Germany can be formal or non-formal. ULLL has changed in Germany during the last decade. There seems to be a shift from the traditional supply-orientation to the demand-orientation. This shift implies the risk of a ULLL program that is only market-oriented. It can be described as a risk (at least in the German context), because education is traditionally understood as a public activity. Within the Bologna reform it is now possible to gain a “Weiterbildungs-Master” (Continuing-Education-Master) and ULLL is finally connected in the context of Lifelong Learning. The development overall seems to lead into a ULLL that starts to compete with other forms of education and is understood as a mean to gain third-party-funds.

The use of ICT in ULLL in Germany

University teaching in Germany is traditionally oriented towards “classroom-learning”. There is a second tradition in distance learning in the GDR which is lost. In 1974 the only public “distance-university “ in Germany the Fernuniversität Hagen was founded. Although the Fernuniversität is not in particular a University for Lifelong Learning it can be described as

the reference for university distance learning in Germany. The distance learning started with study letters, which have been sent to the learner. They still use these study letters combined with e-mail, CD-Roms, DVDs, Videostreams and other Internet based tools like Forums and Chats.

Anyway in general one has to say, that the use of ICT in ULLL is still poor. Nine out of ten



Picture 1. ICT based Courses in ULLL in 2012

offers 57 findings in ULLL using mainly ICT or at least blended learning (Picture 1; Source: <http://www.iwwb.de/>, access: 29.03.2012).

There is a need for some more recent and continuing research in the use of ICT in ULLL, because as it seems it is hard to get a reliable overview of the use of ICT in ULLL using the existing databases. The use of ICT is certainly already much higher, at least if one can trust the self-presentation of the ULLL-units at the Universities. Despite these results within the

offerings in short-term training opportunities (less than 10 h) use only “classroom-learning”. More than 80% of longer training opportunities (40 – 160 h) don’t use ICT. Even 2/3 of the offerings that last until one year don’t use ICT at all. About 25% of these learning opportunities use ICT. The numbers are the same in regard to learning courses lasting more than one year (see Faulstich et al 2007, 133).

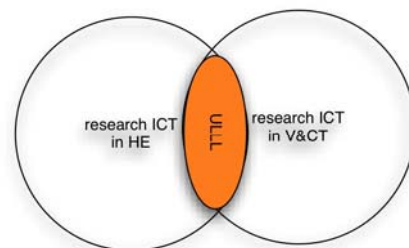
On the other hand it seems necessary to mention, that the use of ICT in ULLL has and will probably grow during the next years. The Database for Continuing Education of the “Deutscher Bildungsserver”

mentioned database Bardachzi claims, that the use of ICT is quite common within the field of so called “Fernstudien” (distance learning at universities). Between 2004 and 2006 the use of ICT in distance learning at universities grew from 25% to 70% (Bardachzi 2010). And it is probably even higher in 2012.

The main advantages of the use of ICT are been seen in the independence of space and time of learning and it usually was been expected to be cheaper than face-to-face learning.

Research on new media in ULLL

The german ULLL as “Wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung” can be described as a rather small part of the educational field. So it comes as no surprise, that there is only little research focussing ULLL and there is even less research that particularly focuses on new media in ULLL. Actually it seems appropriate to describe the field of research on ICT in ULLL as hybrid. As it seems, the field of research on ICT in ULLL is sort of a merged field, so to speak the intersection, between the research on ICT in higher education and the research on ICT in vocational and continuing education.



Picture 2: Research intersection

Within this intersection it is possible to distinguish different types of research. One type of research seems to focus the use of ICT and its general perspective or coming significance, e.g. Bloh & Lehmann 2005. Another type can be described as project-oriented, e.g. Peitz & Stübzig 2004. A third type appears as a description of how to use the new media appropriately. The last type of research takes either a didactical or an evaluative perspective. The significance of the dimension of the evaluation of e-learning is due to question of how useful the use of ICT at universities is (Meister et al 2004). The didactical dimension problematizes the question of how to use ICT at universities in an appropriate way. Within this field of research, the authors either develop didactical models like Pütz (2007) or Moser



(2008) or they describe the forms, problems and rules of e-learning and provide some good practices like Geyer (2005) or Pfäßli (2005) or like it is done in the “Neues Handbuch Hochschullehre” (2006). This research is quite well developed and even appears in Textbooks (Arnold et al 2011) but it is not particularly focussing new media in ULLL. They either focus on new media in higher education more generally or in vocational and continuing training.

The research and the practice of the use of ICT in ULLL is closely related in Germany. This might be linked with the German subsidy policy in the beginning of the first decade from 2000 on and the structure of ULLL in Germany. The players in the practice of ULLL are usually researchers themselves. So the practitioners and researchers in regard to the use of ICT in ULLL are often identical.

Policy and funding priorities

The biggest subsidy-program in supporting the use of new media at universities was probably the BMBF-Förderprogramm (a development program of the German government) “Neue Medien in der Bildung – Bereich Hochschule” (“new media in education – higher education”) between 2001 and 2004. Interesting enough 53% of the authorized project planned to develop instruments or content for ULLL (Bloh & Lehmann 2005, 164). For a more general overview on the initiatives and programmes of federal and state governments it is still recommended to have a look at Kleimann & Wannemacher 2004.

As it has been already mentioned, from the beginning of the last decade on, there was a substantial funding of ICT at Universities. The effect is, as far as I can see, that there is a well developed infrastructure at the universities promoting and supporting the use of ICT.

Current means of Dialogue

There are different forms of dialogue visible. There is the very specific sort of dialogue within one person. The field of research and practice of the use of ICT in ULLL is still quite new. Hence the field is not very differentiated, yet. And it is quite common, that the colleagues at universities who use ICT in ULLL are doing design based research on their use of ICT as well.



This applies particularly to the staff at the e-learning and new media departments at the universities. Another form of dialogue is the mediated dialogue, which develops between researchers and practitioners in giving some feedback (evaluation) how the used instruments did work. And last but not least there is the dialogue, how it is described in the German case study, as a dialogue between researchers in the field of learning and didactics and the practitioners of the development of the means of e-learning or blended learning.

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