

Activity 1: SWOT analysis

Topic assessed: Cooperation between practitioners and researchers in developing, delivering and evaluating the workshop “Potentials and Risks of New Media (Internet and Web 2.0)” at the Center for Continuing Education at the University of Graz

The case study is based on the experiences of one workshop piloted in the winter term 2010/11 in the framework of a ULLL programme for older learners (Vita activa – Bridging generations through learning). The workshop addressed adults of all ages with basic ICT skills. It was attended by 8 persons, aged 36 to 71.

		Helpful in achieving the objective	Harmful in achieving the objective
		Strengths	Weaknesses
Internal Factors		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionalisation 1: workshop not isolated, embedded in the Vita activa programme • Institutionalisation 2: part of the University of Graz commitment to LLL in general and Learning in Later Life in particular (developmental plans 2009-12, 2013-18) • High motivation of researchers/tutors also because of the importance of the topic (digital literacy as a crucial competence for taking part in various societal activities) • The setting was ideal for encouraging “real” cooperation: Purpose-oriented dialogue which was focused on a concrete outcome (= a successful course and better knowledge of staff on the theme) • Development: More time for development than in most educational institutions • Delivery/evaluation: Raising awareness among traditional university lecturers/researchers on how to work with non-traditional learners/with an intergenerational group on the theme “new media” at university level; and on “intergenerational learning” / “adult learning” and “learning of older people” at university level (briefing beforehand; feedback during and after the workshop from participants; working with an adult educator participating in the course as a “facilitator”); also mutual learning of all staff involved took place • Impact on policy on new media in teaching in the Center for Continuing Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experimental, labour and time intense development and delivery setting; difficult to sustain model due to lack of time (teaching in regular university degree programmes, research, academic boards, etc.) and financial restrictions • No relevance for performance record of researchers • Transferability of experience/knowledge produced in this joint learning setting to other facilitators of learning is restricted; some of it can be written down in written guidelines for others

	Opportunities	Threats
External Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The setting could be a model for other experimental development, delivery and evaluation settings (in other thematic areas) Due to a positive experience of joint collaborative work the researchers involved can be seen as future developmental partners for the Center for Continuing Education for work in this area (we've found common ground) Transferability of learning: the researchers can feed their experiences into their regular undergraduate and postgraduate teaching Sustainability: To develop written guidelines in order to overcome potential barriers and to save time in future projects To exploit and disseminate results and experiences made (e.g. via collaborative publications) To create pathways between ULLL and regular degree programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future recruitment of researchers/tutors who are both able and willing to get involved with non-traditional learners (activity not relevant for performance records; too many other commitments of researchers) Due to financial restrictions there is less time for experimental settings where both researchers and practitioners are involved

2. Can the hindering factors (weaknesses and threats) be generalised and applied at national level? Which other hindering factors can be identified?

- **Performance record and career development of researchers:** Compared to research, teaching in the Austrian Higher Education system is still less important for the positive development of careers of (young) researchers. The higher the number of publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals is the more chances researchers have to get on in their individual careers. Since the focus of teaching is on the regular degree programmes, LLL plays a minor role and engagement in activities with non-traditional learners is scarcely relevant to the performance records.
- **Future recruitment of researchers/tutors:** This has, as a matter of fact, negative consequences for the recruitment of researchers/tutors in the future who are both able and willing to get involved with LLL activities in general and a time consuming project such as the course described in the case study in particular. Full time researchers have too many other commitments – a factor that cannot be compensated by retired researchers only since a mixed-age learning setting (both teachers and learners) is an essential part of the course concept.

3. Once you have identified the general hindering factors, please try to analyse their reasons to find out how these factors are embedded in your respective learning and research culture.

Two factors have been identified: performance record and career development of researchers; future recruitment of researchers/tutors. For more details see box 2 above.

4. Actions that could be carried out to overcome these identified reasons for barriers and hindering factors to cooperation between ULLL researchers and practitioners or solutions
Please identify and explain possible solutions for the identified reasons of barriers.

It needs some measures and incentives to make involvement in LLL and the dialogue between researchers and non-traditional learners respectively more attractive:

- **Researchers/university teachers** should be informed about the transferability of learning and that they can feed their experiences into their regular undergraduate and postgraduate teaching; moreover, involvement of non-traditional learners can contribute to generating new research questions and/or even new research projects (keywords “context of discovery”, “learning through research”). Measures: various awareness activities at university level (e.g. dissemination of good practice examples).
- **Learners/participants** should be informed more about the importance of basic “reflective” knowledge on and competences in the use of new media (both potentials and risks) and how they can benefit from participating.
- **“Practitioners”: Developers and providers of ULLL** (academic programme director; tutor): guidelines along with good practice examples on how to work with non-traditional learners and how to work with an intergenerational group on the theme “new media” at university level should be developed for dissemination among university teachers; fostering research-based programming.

5. Actors which (could) play a role in carrying out these actions (based on the network analysis of activity 2 and 3) and reason:

Please reflect on how the identified actors of the network analysis could help to overcome identified barriers and constraints.

Actors	Reason
Researchers/university teachers	Through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a.) disseminating the benefits of the “transferability of learning” at university level and in the scientific community b.) disseminating the positive “by- products” of working with non-traditional learners for research at university level and in the scientific community
Learners/Participants	Through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a.) informing their colleagues, neighbourhood, families etc. about the importance of the theme b.) and how they benefited personally from participating in this specific course
“Practitioners”: Developers and providers of ULLL (academic programme director; tutor, etc.)	Through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a.) producing and disseminating relevant guidelines along with good practice examples b.) fostering research-based programming and sharing their experiences with peers