EQIBELT

TEMPUS JOINT EUROPEAN PROJECT UM_JEP-19105-2004
EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT BY E-LEARNING TECHNOLOGY

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DOCUMENT TITLE:	REPORT ON 1ST EQIBELT WORKSHOP ON E-LEARNING SUPPORT CENTERS
WORKSHOP TITLE:	ESTABLISHMENT OF E-LEARNING SUPPORT CENTERS
TABLE OF CONTENT:	
Workshop site:	Cavtat, Croatia
Dates:	Tuesday, June 20 - Wednesday, June 21, 2006
Organizer:	➢ University of Zagreb University Computing Center
Purpose:	◎ to learn and to collect experience from EU universities about their approach to supporting E-Learning activities and organization of E-Learning support services, groups or centers ◎ to foster the process of establishing of E-Learning support centers at HR partner universities ◎ to help appointed university's E-Learning teams in process of defining and establishing E-Learning support centers
Lecturers (in alphabetic order):	👤 *Rita Falcão,* University of Porto, Portugal 👤 *Nora Mogey*, University of Edinburgh, Scotland 👤 *Eva Obermüller*, Technical University of Vienna, Austria 👤 *Daliborka Pašić,* CARNet, Croatia 👤 *Alfredo Soeiro,* University of Porto, Portugal
Target audience (participants):	👥 Members of university bodies responsible for teaching, E-Learning or ICT 👥 Members of government bodies responsible for implementation of E-Learning methodology and technology 👥 Members of EQIBELT project team and university's E-Learning teams 👥 University teachers involved or interested in E-Learning 👥 ICT or other support staff involved or interested in E-Learning
Web pages:	http://eqibelt.srce.hr/workshops/cavtat/EL_support_centers
Report prepared at	July 2006
Report prepared by	Sandra Kučina
Report approval:	Report revised by workshop participants by e-mail in September, 2006

I   GENERAL REMARKS ON WORKSHOP CONTENT

1st EQIBELT workshop on E-Learning Support Centers was held in Cavtat on June 20th and 21st, 2006, as one of three workshops aimed to help in process of establishing E-Learning support center and recognizing the organizational and financial models, competences and services of such center.

Important headings of the workshop program were lectures of representatives of EU universities on their approach to supporting E-Learning activities and organization of E-Learning support services, groups and centers (listed in the order of presentation):

◈ **Nora Mogey**, University of Edinburgh, Scotland: **The maturing of MALTS from a mixed blend**

◈ **Alfredo Soeiro & Rita Falc**ão, University of Porto, Portugal: **E-Learning@UP –Supporting E-Learning at a traditional University**

◈ **Eva Obermüller**, Technical University of Vienna, Austria: **Vienna University of Technology E-Learning Centre**

as well as lecture delivered by

◈ **Daliborka Pašić**, CARNet, Croatia: **Reference Centers for E-education**

As an introduction to the workshop on June 20, 2006 **prof. Tapio Varis** gave a lecture with the title "**E-Learning goes social - policy becomes inclusive?**" Lecture was presented jointly with the International Conference ITI2006 as a part of conference special session: "E-Learning: Opportunities and Challenges for Learning and Teaching".

Workshop was chaired by Sandra Kučina (University of Zagreb University Computing Center), member of the EQIBELT project core team.

Important contributions to the workshop were given by vice rectors of the University of Zagreb: prof. Vlasta Vizek Vidović (vicerector for international relations) and prof. Vjekoslav Jerolimov (vicerector for education and student affairs) and prof. Aleksa Bjeliš, former vice-rector for research and development at University of Zagreb.

Important parts of workshop were discussions during the lectures, Q&A sessions and general discussion session.

Full list of workshop participants is given in separate document, published on workshop web pages.

II   CONCLUSIONS OF THE WORKSHOP

The following conclusions are outcomes of lectures and discussions that took place during the workshop.

E-Learning support center should provide multidisciplinary support to teachers and students

E-Learning support center in general can cover all fields of teaching and learning as well as information and communication technologies. Therefore competences of support center can be in: methodology and pedagogy, communication, instructional design, media development, graphic design, E-Learning tools, ICT tools, testing and evaluation, project management and project coordination, team management, etc.

Experts in special skills such as: instructional design, graphic design, media development and project management can be in charge of production of high quality educational multimedia content.

It is important to recognize specific needs for support in the field of E-Learning at particular university / faculty / school

In the process of implementation of E-Learning in higher education it's very important to give a support to the teachers and students engaged in E-Learning activities, to motivate them and challenge them to think in a new way.

For effectiveness of E-Learning support center it is necessary to recognize and analyze the specific (particular, particular) needs of potential users (teachers and students) and provide them with qualitative support as well as explain them the benefits of using E-Learning. Established E-Learning Support Centers should provide faculty and students with enhanced services and support related to online learning and instructional technology.

As potential users of E-Learning support center should be recognized all faculty staff interested or engaged in the development of E-Learning courses, students and institution itself.

At the begging center should provide support to the teachers and in due time broaden its services to the student population. Institution will get indirect benefits of such center through improvement of quality of education, efficiency, transparency and competitiveness.

Teachers' needs are usually recognized in fields such as: technical support in usage of ICT, providing of E-Learning tools, applying ICT in teaching, providing quality assurance in teaching, multidisciplinary approach to teaching and learning, using different communication channels and tools to enhance teaching and learning, etc.

Chose appropriate organizational model for support of E-Learning at particular university / faculty / school

Organization and planning of E-Learning support center should be an integral part of an overall E-Learning planning process and should follow the general organizational model of the university / school.

Based on conclusions from the 1ˢᵗ Policy Workshop in Dubrovnik on E-Learning strategy and vision, E-Learning in general and establishment and running of E-Learning support center should be recognized by university and faculty management as integral part of overall university organization and part of overall educational vision, strategy and practice.

Each of the Croatian universities, project consortium members, should find its own organizational model of E-Learning support center. Some can prefer centralized model (with central support unit at the university level) and others decentralized model (each faculty / school / department has his own support unit). Based on existing practices of (de)centralization and control of common university's services in respective institution, various variations are possible.

University of Rijeka has already defined organizational model within the project "E-University". University of Dubrovnik will most probably choose centralized model and University of Zagreb, because of its proportions and diversification, is most likely to choose coordinated decentralized model, with a central unit at the university level. This model should ensure specialized resources and support, as well as coordination with the support groups at faculties that will be first line support to the teachers and students.

Centers should foster project approach and team work.

Define specific competences and services of E-Learning support center / group at particular university / faculty / school

Defining open and friendly policy of E-Learning Support Center is of great importance. People working in the center should provide friendly image and try not to reject any professor with his/hers request. As the first impression is really important, there should be always some way to say "yes" to all enquiries coming from teachers. .

Gathering of competences and services which will enable teachers to be efficient, effective and competitive in teaching, research and serving society is first important task that should be fulfilled for every particular university or school.

It is important to find out which of the competences are most crucial for teachers at every particular university / school and to provide support intensively in these areas.
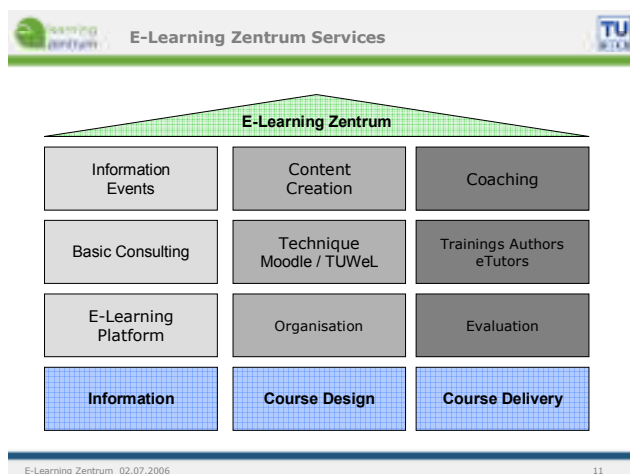
Center can organize training courses for teachers on the development of new pedagogical skills and approaches needed in E-Learning environment. Center can provide computer or web-based instructional tools. Helpdesk within center can answer questions in the field of ICT and E-Learning, so users will get immediate answers to theirs questions. At the same time they will not have to worry on technical issues which will be covered by support center experts.

E-Learning support center is a good place to establish and maintain university repositories of learning objects, but also repositories of simple elements like collections of photos, videos, animations and other multimedia objects, that can be used in education and incorporated in E-Learning courses.

Center can provide technical support and services by ensuring central server and system administration for E-Learning environment at university level.

One of the most important services E-Learning support center can provide is being promoter of E-Learning by dissemination of the information about E-Learning and giving recommendations and models of usage of ICT in education.

Examples on services provided by E-Learning support center in case of TUW and University of Porto:

Provide real resources to E-Learning support center to become operational and continuously effective

In order to become operational and to provide real and sustainable support, E-Learning support centers should have full time employees, as well as part time associates and other necessary resources.

It is important to appoint to E-Learning support center a number of full time employees with primary (only) task to provide support in field of E-Learning. It is impossible to provide long-term sustainable and quality support as part -time or voluntary job.

Necessary financial and technical resources should be provided to E-Learning support center to contract with experts in fields that are not available within the E-Learning support center staff and to provide E-Learning specific tools and environments that are not available at other places within university / faculty. It is also important to provide resources for promotion of E-Learning and motivation and awarding teachers and students using E-Learning technology.

Although the establishment process of E-Learning support center will be financed through EQIBELT project, it is of great importance to ensure within the university plan and budget employment of full time staff for center.

For sustainability of E-Learning support center and its services it is also important to have clear organizational and financial decisions of university management and full and clear integration of center into university's management, organizational, financial and planning model.

All existing and available resources and approaches at national, university and faculty level should be used to support E-Learning activities

Because of complexity and broadness of process of implementation and support of E-Learning it is important to involve all stakeholders, all currently existing and available resources, including institutions as Srce and CARNet, as well as existing groups and experts in field of E-Learning within universities and faculties in the synergic organizational model of supporting E-Learning at each university.

Although each university should decide on its own educational strategy and approach and organizational model of using and supporting e-learning, it is good idea to use existing resources at national level, to exchange ideas and best practices and to discuss and agree on possible common approaches or resource pools.

The following schema illustrates possibilities for involvement of different providers to provide services within the framework of e-learning implementation and support at university level: