Document title:	**Report on Study Visit to Valencia University of Technology (Universidad Politecnica de Valencia), Valencia, Spain**
	UNIVERSIDAD POLITECNICA DE VALENCIA
Study visit host:	Josè Vicente Lacruz Chiva, Continuing Education Centre (Centro de Formacion de Postgrado, CFP)
HR participants:	♦ Zoran Bekić, University of Zagreb, project coordinator ♦ Sandra Kučina-Softić, University of Zagreb ♦ Prof. Vlasta Vizek-Vidović, University of Zagreb ♦ Lucijana Leoni, University of Dubrovnik ♦ Dr. Marta Žuvić-Butorac, University of Rijeka
Duration of visit:	May 18-20, 2006
Report prepared at	May 2006
Report prepared by	Marta Žuvić-Butorac

I GENERAL REMARKS

Study visit to Valencia University of Technology (Universidad Politecnica de Valencia, http://www.cfp.upv.es) is the second study visit of Croatian representatives to European consortium partners realized within the framework of the EQIBELT project. As for all study visits, this one has had the purpose of acquiring the knowledge and experience through direct contact with experts and practitioners in the field of e-learning, to learn best practices, to discuss and analyze successful and unsuccessful projects and to have on-site practical overview and experience on organization and delivery of support in field of e-learning.

The host of the study visit and the organizer of the program was **Josè Vicente Lacruz Chiva**, project coordinator in the Continuing Education Centre that delivers open and distant education using e-learning technology. He presented us Valencia University of Technology and especially Continuing Education Centre and introduced scheduled program of out visit. The program included presentations prepared and delivered by employees of Valencia University of Technology involved in the e-learning education programs in the institution. Presentations were held by:

- 🎤 **Josè Vicente Lacruz Chiva**, project coordinator in the Continuing Education Centre: Production methodologies for open and distance learning/Pedagogical models for open and distance learning at CFP

- 🎤 **Roberto Romero Llop** (CEE Manager): Information management and content management systems for support of open and distance learning – POSEIDON and BUDDHA

- 🎤 **Roberto Romero Llop** (CEE Manager): Virtual Communities and BUDDHA

- 🎤 **Josè Vicente Lacruz Chiva**, project coordinator in the Continuing Education Centre: Design, production and marketing of open and distance learning at CFP

- 🎤 **Marta Martínez García** (CFP Mentor's coordinator): Mentoring of on-line courses at CFP

Each of presentations was followed by discussion with CFP experts.

In general, visit was well prepared and organized by Valencia University of Technology, providing contacts with high competent experts and very useful discussions on topics relevant to project goals and objectives.

II FACTS FROM PRESENTATIONS & REFLECTIONS ON DISCUSSIONS:

Josè Vicente Lacruz Chiva, project coordinator in the Continuing Education Centre:
Presentation of the Valencia University of Technology and CFP

☑ Facts & figures about Valencia University of Technology (UP Valencia) and Continuing Education Centre (CFP):
- 14 Faculties, 35 000 students
- Continuing Education Centre (CFP) at UP Valencia:
  ➢ 33 000 students involved
  ➢ 1 900 courses per year
  ➢ 3 types of courses: Master studies ($\approx$ 500 h per year), Specialist's education ($\approx$ 200-400 h per year), courses on market demand (Companies, Government, international offers)
  ➢ 45 employees (60% on University budget, 40% temporarily employed on projects)

- UP Valencia has an organizational model (shown on the following scheme) that supports all three University mission statements (research, education, serving to the society):
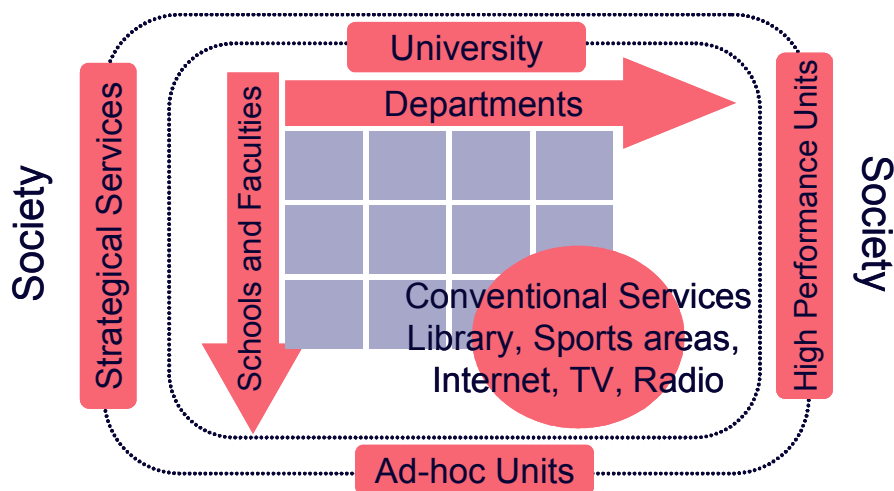
- *Strategical services*:
  - Students Exchange Service
  - Information Office
  - Language center
 - Senior University
  - Virtual University

- *Ad-hoc Units*:
  - Technology Transfer Center
  - Continuing Education Center (CFP)
  - Entrepreneurship program
  - Employment Center
  - Learning Methodologies Center
  - International Area

- *High Performance Units*
  - Research Institutes
  - Research Centers
  - Research Parks

- At UP Valencia, the 3rd mission is shortly stated as "to cooperate *glocally* (globally & locally) with society and industry". Third mission includes services to the community, region, society and industry, with special attention brought to technology transfer, life long learning (continuing education) and employment & entrepreneurs services, presented with the next scheme.
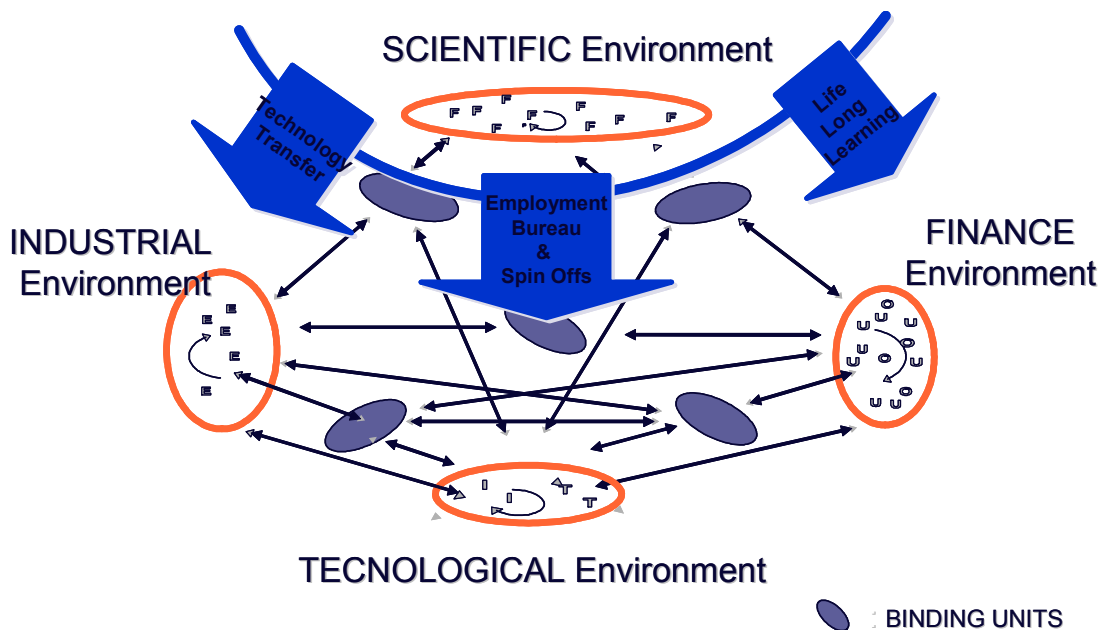
☑ CFP's Mission and Vision:
- CFP's mission is to help (din amice) the University in order to offer innovative and high quality continuing education that collaborate to develop the social environment
- This mission supports the vision of managing to achieve that the UP Valencia becomes a national and international institutional reference offering high quality continuing education.

☑ Open and distance learning program at CFP:
- Started as cooperation on a joint project with Helsinki Technical University in 1996. Experiences and knowledge gained on the project helped to start the development of courses within the institution.
- During first years of open and distance learning implementation, the information management and content management in-house systems (*Poseidon* and *Buddha*) were developed.

- In the open and distance learning segment, CFP has the mission of providing the complete support for the University – it provides technical support, instructional design support, marketing of the courses and mentoring of the courses.
- Nowadays, CFP has already around 10 000 hours of on-line course materials developed.
- In the field of open and distance learning, CFP has established the cooperation with foreign Spanish speaking countries in Middle and South America. CFP has offices in Mexico, Columbia, Argentina, Peru, offering open and distance education for Universities, Governments, Companies and individuals.
- The CFP's "customers" are students, teachers, departments and/or schools, Research Units & Institutes, financers: Governmental Agencies and "Seed capital", those who develop products and services for the others, those who construct machines for the rest and develop basically applied research.

Roberto Romero Llop (CEE Manager): *Information management and content management systems for support of open and distance learning – POSEIDON and BUDDHA*

☑ POSEIDON is a Information Management System developed at Continuing Education Center. It is built upon the experience gathered during years of managing the Continuing Education; it is based as a model with c*entralised information and distributed management.* It has been implemented in 2001 and since then is in the deployment. Provides Web Services for clients, such as registration On-line and newsletter. Multiple functions could be specified:
  - Function 1: Management of clients – lists customers, provides information about new courses and news, provides control of students (contact data, courses, invoices, certificates, interests)
  - Function 2: Management of education products – provides control for the state of a course, management and control of modular courses, use of Virtual Secretary's Office in specific course for departments and total management of a course (information for Web students, teachers, information on invoices and payments, relationship of agreements, certificates, surveys, lists and results, provides access for coordinators of courses)
  - Function 3: Documentation management - rregister of entries and dispatch / release of documents, scans, files; access to the documents from the sites in which are required)
  - Function 4: payment management (receipts, invoices and incomes / payments, compatibility with Banking Standard Notebook)
  - Function 5: Security - https, code documents, control of critic events, dynamic management of roles, restricted accesses according to the roles.
  - Others: Survey System, Management of Virtual Communities, Documental management of on-line courses (Buddha).
☑ BUDDHA is a content management system that runs under Poseidon, providing user friendly managing the content of on-line courses.

Roberto Romero Llop (CEE Manager): *Virtual Communities and BUDDHA*

☑ Virtual communities under Poseidon provide several group characteristics: Forums, Calendars, News, Surveys, Documents, Connection with Buddha, Management of Roles.

☑ Buddha is a content management system, applicable for managing on-line course content as well as web pages content. It is compatible with SCORM standard.

☑ Poseidon virtual communities and Buddha were demonstrated on selected on-line courses and web services supporting continuing education at CFP.

Josè Vicente Lacruz Chiva, project coordinator in the Continuing Education Centre: *Design, production and marketing of open and distance education at CFP*

☑ A specific value chain is developed for design, production and marketing of open and distance learning; confronted with the value chain for f2f offers, the main difference is the complete integration of all delivery aspects of product (marketing, information, registration and economical management, teaching / learning and evaluation) prior to product release.

☑ Continuing education has learners of different type with respect to formal, undergraduate students (mature people with specific learning needs, highly motivated for acquiring knowledge, responsible for self-education, professionally responsible).

☑ For the specific problems that could appear in distance learning (high drop-out, unsatisfaction of learners), the theory of "hygiene factors" (absence of which creates unsatisfaction) and "motivation factors" (presence of which increases satisfaction) was employed. With the decomposition of all possible factors that support learners' success in the course to the categories of "hygiene" and "motivation", it is possible to detect and work on weak links in the system. As the highest ranked hygiene factors, learners declare tutoring and connection, while in the category of motivation factors, mentoring and support services.

☑ The production and the realization of ODL materials follows the schemes:
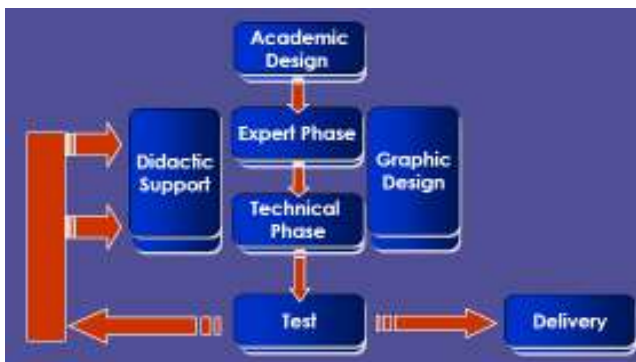
☑ The production of ODL materials is calculated to consume 20 hours of work for 1 hour of material (equivalent of 1 hour f2f classes), 10 of which are the workload of expert and the

rest the work of coordinator (2h), technical team (2h), graphic designers (2h) and pedagogical and editorial support (4h).

☑ ODL course structure is prescribed as decomposed to *modules* and modules to *thematic units (mini courses)*. Each thematic unit consists of *Introduction*, *Objectives*, *Classes*, *Remember*, *Glossary*, *Bibliography*, *Common mistakes*, *Workshop* and *Self-evaluation*. Classes are further decomposed to *Schema*, *Case study*, *Theory* and *Annexes*.

☑ Some specific suggestions, drown from the experience gained in intensive production and delivery of ODL:
  o Web based learning can be applied successfully in adult education
  o Requires new kind of materials that take into consideration specific learning models, limitations and restrictions
  o Producing of ODL materials requires: simple tools, interdisciplinary teams, new roles and skills, specific didactic support, training of teachers
  o Production of ODL materials is an expensive and labor intensive task
  o You cannot improvise!
  o In the delivery, required are: definition of new roles (facilitators of interaction and learner support), hygienically and motivational environments, complementary materials, f2f meetings and support, teacher training

Marta Martínez García (CFP Mentor's coordinator): *Mentoring of on-line courses at CFP*

☑ Key elements in the process of e-learning are: technological platform, contents, tutoring and interactivity. The focus needs to be on tutoring and interactivity.

☑ The interactivity is about exchanging roles and messages; in virtual environment, the interaction needs to be dynamic and is realized through e-mail, virtual communities, chat,

☑ Use of media should be balanced (controlled)

☑ A good tutoring is critical for the motivation of learners; motivation varies during the course, usually is very high at the beginning, falls down around the middle and again is brought back high at the end of the course.

☑ In distance learning, the detection of attention is also of high importance for the student's follow –up; detection of attention is performed through checking the connection control, checking the submission of results to exercises, mail contacts and interactivity

☑ In ODL, mentor has a mission of observing the evolution of the process of delivery and to activate the interactivity with students

☑ Mentor communicates: administrative information, academic information (proceeds it to the tutor) information on general training, personal information, subjects to argue about.

☑ Some suggestions: distance learning should be used as a tool for educators and tutors, not only as a tool for training students, human element is a key to the success of the learning process, the attention is the most precious thing in the cyberspace.