

GUIDE THEMATIC WORKSHOP EUROPEAN AREA
EXCELLENCE MODELS FOR A GLOBAL UNIVERSITY NETWORK
KRAKOW (PL), 21 MARCH 2007

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The GUIDE Thematic Workshop European Area held in Krakow the last 21 March 2007 was the first of the geographical area appointments organized by GUIDE in collaboration with Prof. Krzysztof Gurba and the Tischner European University with the aim of consolidating the Association operative structure based on a system of meetings of excellence.

The Workshop was attended by 30 Universities from all over Europe and has offered an interesting space for debate and comparison of the experiences achieved in the adoption of flexible learning and teaching models based on methodological approach to research and education.

In the four parallel sessions (two in the morning and two in the afternoon), the emerging problems linked to the transformation of the traditional education systems in different European areas have been discussed, focusing on the actual research macro-lines concerning distance learning experimental applications and didactic methodologies.

A careful analysis of the outcomes in the field of flexible learning solutions, collaborative learning environments, multidisciplinary and multimedia contents, innovative tools and services has led to the common concern about the definition of an institutional framework for new e-learning applications.

In this context the discussion on quality standards has showed the need to define common guidelines for the e-learning content production, the adoption of technological instruments and processes, the implementation of collaborative projects both at local and global levels.

To achieve these results, the importance to reach a balance between technological innovation and well established methodologies has been taken into account, through the definition of valuable practices and procedures for the use of tools and methodological models constantly changing and updated.

According to the members' opinion, the implementation of a culture of continuous exchange and the constitution of collaborative inter-institutional networks, could allow ODL - Open Distance Learning - universities, to adopt a strategic

approach to innovation implementing quality and achieving excellence¹ in a better way.

The network of researchers and experts participating in the event has explored the possibility to create a common background for active dissemination and exploitation of outcomes across different European countries, showing the intention to collaborate in the definition of common objectives and quality standards for the improvement of a high standard research cooperation system.

To accomplish this objective, the Association is engaged in the reinforcement of the already existing international cooperation by promoting and sharing, in a continuous way, the exchange of expertise and experiences in the field of new information and communication technologies.

In this framework, the further GUIDE Thematic Workshops, which will involve in the next months the African, Middle and Far East, and American institutions, will enable a permanent communication system between the joining universities which are supported in the creation of sharing networks and linked development projects according with the main objective of the new European and international programs.

I. Antonio Moreira Teixeira, *Quality by innovation: the implementation of a culture of continuous change as the driving force for excellence in ODL*, GUIDE Thematic Workshop-European Area, Krakow, 21 March 2007.