OEB ONLINE EDUCA BERLIN

6TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TECHNOLOGY
SUPPORTED LEARNING AND TRAINING
BERLIN, GERMANY, 1-3 DECEMBER 2010

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The OEB Conference Berlin, December 1-3 2010, allowed participants to share the innovations in the e-learning sector, debate about the ethical and social impact of the new technologies, acknowledge the current challenges for the virtual environments and discover the most recent developments in the professional field applications.

In the exhibition and demonstration area, many service suppliers showed innovative activities and products on distance learning such as courses distributed into Moodle and Blackboard, delivery systems of e-learning contents and consultancy, and software solutions for employees' online training.

The conference, organized in the InterContinental Hotel, gathered about 2000 representatives coming from all over the world. The main themes dealt with were:

- Open source platforms and virtual educational environments
- E-portfolios
- Multimedia applications and virtual realities
- Pedagogical aspects
- Learning content creation

Great attention was paid to the interoperability theme, the trend to find new quality standards in order to make the different information systems and technological applications compatible.

The learning results assessment was the focus of the research project *CEFcult* realized by the K.U. Leuven - Language Institute (Belgium), which intends to promote intercultural professional communication through an innovative assessment tool for self, peer and *expert assessment*, allowing the users to record their oral production in the foreign language and make it available to the teacher, who will evaluate their competences according to the CEFR - Common European Framework of Reference.

The COMPACT project carried out by the Masaryk University Brno, Czech Republic, focused on a new technological approach to foreign language learning. It actually offers a wide range of new

courses in which students are asked to learn through simulations, developing in particular the following *soft skills: Intercultural Communication, Creativity, Critical Thinking and Self-Assessment, Time and Stress Management, Conflict Solving Emotional Intelligence e Project Management.*

Another topic deeply treated during the three-day conference was the quality assessment in the e-learning systems. In this regard, a representative of the Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance and Career Development (Russia) illustrated the necessity to find new models and standards assuring quality in distance learning, where parameters constantly change, not only from a technological point of view, but also at the ethical and content levels. Such agency, in collaboration with EFQUEL - European Foundation for Quality in E-Learning, since last year has offered in Russia the UNIQUe programme, providing those universities engaged in online education with an external audit and, in case of eligibility, with a certification of quality.

In the same context, the SEVAQ+ project realized by the University of Nancy 2 (France), was conceived to allow institutions to self-assess the distance learning quality, combing the evaluation model of Kirkpatrick with the EFQM - European Foundation for Quality Management one.

In the framework of the electronic portfolios, which are persistently gaining more and more recognition as valuable tools for learners, instructors and academic organizations, the intervention of Università degli Studi Guglielmo Marconi *USGM's E-Portfolio: An Innovative Tool for Language Learning* illustrated the advantages of the electronic language portfolio compared to the traditional models. Such instrument, designed and developed by the International Relations Office in collaboration with the Graphics and Multimedia Production Department, has been conceived to mainly fulfill two basic functions: the pedagogic function, by enhancing learners motivation, self-assessment and autonomous learning, and the documentation and reporting function, by giving users the opportunity to record and display their diplomas and certificates, selected written texts or audio/ video recording of oral productions. This model offers an innovative and efficient methodology for the evaluation of formal and non-formal training experiences, following the guidelines provided by the Council of Europe concerning language learning.