



GUIDE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2011 *“E-LEARNING INNOVATIVE MODELS FOR THE INTEGRATION OF EDUCATION, TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH”*

Università degli Studi “Guglielmo Marconi”, Rome, 18 - 19 November 2011

Arturo Lavallo

A brief overview

The shift from a traditional teaching model to an innovative way of providing education implies the modernization of the organizational structures within institutions and the development of ICT-mediated training processes able to efficiently merge pedagogy, technology and research.

Starting from this consideration, it becomes necessary to build up effective and updated competences in providing teaching and learning courses based on technologies as well as in strengthening the organizational-managerial know-how of those who are engaged in planning and developing “online” training paths. In this framework quality represents an essential factor of a high level educational offer which is provoking a real revolution in the processes of valorization of the common heritage of competences constantly producing new knowledge.

The importance that quality is increasingly assuming in every aspect of higher education was at the basis of GUIDE International Conference 2011 which was held in Rome, on 18-19 November 2011 and that mainly focused on the evolution of the knowledge-based society and on the personalization, accessibility and flexibility of the new e-learning models.

The participation to the Conference this year was the highest ever being the event joined by around 200 participants coming from more than 50 countries. The discussion addressed crucial themes and issues related to higher education in general and distance learning in particular such as the importance to share best practices for establishing high-level quality standards, the progressively more predominant role of instructional design in training programs, the growing interest that multiuser virtual environments are taking for enhancing learners’ engagement, the prospects and problems related to the implementation of assessment, evaluation and self-assessment systems in distance education and the crucial role played by the development of

efficient educational and vocational guidance services.

The presentations given by speakers mostly focused on three main topics: the need to face the technological evolution and its impact on the learning process especially in developing countries, the usefulness of developing learning paths in virtual worlds, the innovative methods and solutions adopted to assess and evaluate the different components of the education process, the valuable and fundamental contribution that guidance and supporting services together with electronic instruments such as e-portfolios can give to students' successful orientation and performance.

It is evident that all these elements are unified by a common thread that laces them together, i.e. Quality Assurance, which is related to every aspect of the educational system and that makes it possible to achieve excellence and produce qualified human resources. In this respect the presentation of the GUIDE publication "*E-learning Quality Assurance: a Multi-perspective Approach*" provided an interesting overview on cases and experiences coming from different geographical, social and cultural contexts that offered diverse dimensions and practices on how QA is being implemented across the world.

A great added value to the general debate was also brought by the launch of the *Fadrive Certification Model* aiming to create an innovative model of quality certification conceived as a process-centred rather than a content-centred technology-mediated education project.



Figure 1. Fadrive Certification.

Such model originated from a vision emphasizing the importance of the role that ICT-mediated distance learning covers in terms of effectiveness of services supporting training and of valorization of human capital. According to the principles of Fadrive Certification, institutions engaged in providing e-learning courses and programmes have to comply with specific requirements

concerning all the phases connected to the implementation of distance learning systems such as organization, planning, services delivery, monitoring and evaluation, research and development. Only in that way academic institutions can provide an efficient and rigorous management of teaching and learning processes and assure a high quality level of their educational offer. As a result of its compliance with the defined requirements, Università degli Studi Guglielmo Marconi of Rome, Italy was awarded with the first Fadrive Certification by the creator of the model, namely the specialized company Certi W®.

To sum up, what emerged from GUIDE International Conference 2011 was that:

- The diffusion and the adoption of e-learning at a large scale have to be promoted in a logic of Quality Assurance
- It is essential to approach in a holistic and quality-oriented way all components related to e-learning systems creation, production and delivery
- Quality policies have to be centred on students in order to meet their needs, expectations and ambitions
- It is fundamental to raise awareness of the importance to advance a culture of quality within institutions in a continuous quest for improvement and excellence

Those results and recommendations together with other crucial issues interesting the world of e-learning will be further investigated and analyzed in order to be discussed in the next GUIDE Conference.

For more information see http://www.guideassociation.org/guideassociation/GUIDE2011_Report/tabid/131/language/it-IT/Default.aspx