Project Presentations (Several)

VISCED
A Transnational Appraisal of
Virtual School and College Provision

Deliverable: D7.4

Education and Culture DG
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Abstract	This short report summarise the presentations given by VISCED partners of the project and its related activities at conferences.
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1. Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to report on the 15 conferences or events where a presentation about VISCED was delivered. At the start of the project a total of 12 of these events were targeted and so the final results are above expectation. This list only includes events where a formal presentation based either wholly or considerably on the VISCED work was included on the conference programme. There are also a considerable number of other events where the work of VISCED was represented and these are reported on in the general dissemination deliverable D7.9.

Of the 15 events presented, 7 are significant events addressing the European education and training sector as a whole. A further2 are highly relevant events outside Europe as they take place in the US and New Zealand and the others are largely national events, although many of the national or large regional events have a significant number of people attending form other countries.

The presentations given ranged from key-note presentations to presentations in parallel session and also to leadership of workshop sessions dedicated to relevant topics. The list also includes VISCED"s own event, the Virtual School Colloquium which took place in Sheffield in May 2012, although this event is reported on more fully in D7.9.

These presentations provided an excellent opportunity to share the work of VISCED with the wider education and training community, to recruit researchers to the ongoing investigations into the virtual school and college phenomenon worldwide but particularly in Europe and to test out initial ideas and conclusions with experts and policy-makers alike.

2. Project Presentations

Introduction

In the original proposal, the partners had stated that they were expecting to present VISCED at at least 12 'International' Conferences. In order to achieve this ambitious level of conference presentation, a plan for conference attendance was put in place as has already been described in Deliverable 7.1, the Dissemination strategy – see Chapter 6 on Conference planning. This chapter contained a list of 27 targeted events that had been decided upon at that stage. Effort to have presentations about VISCED then began in earnest with papers and submissions made to relevant conferences and events. Inclusion in such events is not under the control of the partners and so it was not possible to have a presentation about VISCED included in all the events that the partnership would have liked, however the final list of presentations taken collectively provides we believe an excellent opportunity for dissemination for the project team.

This Deliverable reports on the conferences which were attended and provides copies where relevant of the presentations that have been given with some further information about each of the conferences and the nature of the VISCED involvement.

Presentations at these 15 events represented a significant exposure of the project activities and outcomes, VISCED was mentioned on programmes and news articles about each are contained in the VISCED newsletter and website. In addition to these events, there are also a significant number of other events and conferences where VISCED was represented either through the distribution of leaflets or some other means. These events are described in D7.9.

Finally, it is worth noting that only in a sub-set of these conferences were the costs of participation directly funded from the project grant and where this occurred, this has been indicated separately with a European flag. This means that not all the presentations shown highlighted the same degree of European Commission support as can be seen from the slides shown.

Conferences attended

The following list provides the necessary details of conferences where a VISCED Project related presentation was given. In each case, we have provides details about the conference and links for further information. A copy of the presentation slides where available is included in the annex and posted on the VISCED Slideshare account

1	Event title	ALT-C 2011
	Date	6 -8 September 2011
	Location	University of Leeds, UK
	Description	This was the 18th international annual conference of the Association for Learning Technology in the UK which is a highly prestigious event attracting many academics and researchers.
	Relevant links	http://www.alt.ac.uk/altc/alt-c-2011
	News story	http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info/news/visced-workshop-accepted-alt-c-2011
	Nature of input	Nick Jeans from Sero gave a presentation at this event on behalf of

		VISCED called "Investigating Innovative e-learning initiatives and Virtual Schools" which provided a good overview of the context of the VISCED work and orientation at month 9 of the project
	Slideshare account	http://www.slideshare.net/VISCED/01-alt-2011

2	Event title	EFQUEL Innovation Forum
	Date	14-16 September 2011
	Location	Oeiras, Portugal
	Description	The EFQUEL Innovation Forum 2011 was called "Certify the future…?! Accreditation, Certification and Internationalisation". This annual international forum by EFQUEL provides an opportunity to discuss future and innovative practices, research and policy developments in the various sectors of education.
	Relevant links	http://eif.efquel.org/files/2012/03/Booklet_EIF2011_20110902_webversion.pdf
	News story	http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info/news/first-meeting-visced-international-advisory-committee-taking-place-portugal
	Nature of input	Paul Bacsich from SERO led a workshop at this event entitled "Critical success factors and quality aspects for virtual schools" The presentation given by Paul to launch this workshop is entitled "Benchmarking and critical success factors for Virtual Schools". This event was also linked to the first meeting of the International Advisory Committee of VISCED and so participation in this forum provided several opportunities for the VISCED team to extend their network.
	Slideshare account	http://www.slideshare.net/VISCED/02-benchmarking-forvirtualschoolsmods

3	Event title	Next Generation Learning Conference 2012
	Date	21-23 February 2012
	Location	Dalarna University, Sweden
	Description	This conference organised by KTH Royal Institute of Technology was a Nordic event on the implications for learning and education of the digital revolution. It was aimed at development and research projects in both educational and professional settings.
	Relevant links	http://www.du.se/en/NGL/Next-Generation-Learning-Conference-2012/
	News story	http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info/news/next-generation-learning-conference-2012-sweden
	Nature of input	A joint presentation entitled "International benchmarking. The first dual mode distance learning benchmarking club" was given by Ebba Ossiannilsson from Lund University on behalf of a team of researchers that included Paul Bacsich from Sero. It includes a significant number of references to VISCED and helped to consolidate the NORDIC input to VISCED .
	Slideshare account	http://www.slideshare.net/VISCED/03-ngl-internationalbenchmarking

4	Event title	DEANZ conference
	Date	11-13 April 2012
	Location	Wellington, New Zealand
	Description	The biannual DEANZ conference is the premier conference in Aotearoa New Zealand for leaders and practitioners involved in open, flexible and distance learning. The 2012 conference theme was 'Shift Happens' with three themes of resilience, relevance and reform.
	Relevant links	http://www.deanz.org.nz/home/index.php/deanz-conference-2012/conference-2012
	News story	http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info/news/keynote-presentation-features-visced-work-new-zealand
	Nature of input	Paul Bacsich from Sero gave a keynote presentation at this conference entitled “Analytic conceit or operational necessity? Towards the Multiversity - An integrated view of where we are in the world of e-learning “which included a significant input on VISCED. While in New Zealand, Paul had a number of opportunities to extend the VISCED network and included an opportunity to provide input on a case study form that region.
	Slideshare account	http://www.slideshare.net/VISCED/04-analytic-conceitoroperationalnecessitydeanz

5	Event title	Finland ITK-Forum
	Date	18-20 April 2012
	Location	Hämeenlinna, Finland
	Description	This conference is the largest conference in Finland related to information and communication technology in educational use. The conference started in 1990 and took place this spring for the 23rd time.
	Relevant links	http://www.itk.fi/2012/info/english
	News story	http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info/news/major-conference-ict-education-takes-place-finland
	Nature of input	Merja Sjöblom from TIEKE introduced VISCED to participants by showing them around the main VISCED dissemination channels, the website and wiki and then distributing brochures. This was done by participating in TIEKE partner presentations and stands as is typical for this type of event in Finland.
	Slideshare account	None

6	Event title	The VISCED Colloquium for Virtual Schools
	Date	22-23 May 2012
	Location	Sheffield, UK
	Description	The VISCED Consortium organised a one day colloquium that brought together practitioners and researchers involved in virtual schooling from around the world. The programme for the day included presentations from different virtual schools across Europe and North America and discussions about quality and critical success factors for virtual schools, as well as topics such as sustainability, regulatory

		frameworks and pedagogy.
	Relevant links	http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info/visced-colloquium-for-virtual-schools
	News story	http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info/news/european-virtual-schools-colloquium-gets-ground-sheffield
	Nature of input	This colloquium was organised by the VISCED partners and so the event was totally dedicated to the topic of virtual schools and colleges and the work of VISCED. There is a dedicated part of the workshop here: http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info/visced-colloquium-for-virtual-schools where all the presentations and interviews with participants can be found. A more elaborate description of the colloquium can be found in Deliverable 7.9.
	Slideshare account	See presentations available on VISCED website: http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info/visced-colloquium-for-virtual-school

7	Event title	EDEN annual conference
	Date	6-9 June 2012
	Location	Porto, Portugal
	Description	This annual conference is one of the best attended European conferences for researchers, policy-makers and others interested in open and distance learning at all levels.
	Relevant links	http://www.eden-online.org/2012_porto.html
	News story	http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info/news/presentation-visced-eden-conference-porto
	Nature of input	Paul Bacsich from Sero gave a well-attended presentation entitled “The (different) news from VISCED: Virtual Schooling for all ages And what universities can learn from that “, leaflets were distributed and a number of side meetings organised with relevant researchers.
	Slideshare account	http://www.slideshare.net/VISCED/07-the-differentnewsfromviscedededen

8	Event title	The Future of Education International Conference
	Date	7-8 June 2012
	Location	Florence, Italy
	Description	This annual international event aims to promote transnational cooperation and share good practice in the field of innovation for Education.
	Relevant links	www.pixel-online.net/edu_future2012
	News story	http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info/news/visced-presented-future-education-conference-florence
	Nature of input	Daniela Proli from Scienter gave a presentation about VISCED on behalf of the consortium entitled “Virtual Schooling & the Future of Education Is there a European way?”, leaflets were also distributed at this event.
	Slideshare account	http://www.slideshare.net/VISCED/08-virtual-schoolingandthefutureofeducation

9	Event title	ALT-C
	Date	11-13 September 2012
	Location	University of Manchester, UK
	Description	This was the 19th international annual conference of the Association for Learning Technology in the UK which is a highly prestigious event attracting many academics and researchers.
	Relevant links	http://www.alt.ac.uk/altc2012
	News story	http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info/news/visced-presentation-main-policy-recommentations-alt-c
	Nature of input	Presentation given by Barry Phillips from Sero entitled "Virtual schooling in Europe: Removing the policy traps. VISCED:A Transnational Appraisal of Virtual School and College Provision" focussed on the first set of policy recommendations emerging from VISCED.
	Slideshare account	http://www.slideshare.net/VISCED/09-virtual-schoolingineuropealt

10	Event title	EFQUEL Innovation Forum
	Date	26-28 September 2012,
	Location	Granada, Spain
	Description	The EFQUEL Innovation Forum 2012 provided an opportunity to discuss future and innovative practices, research and policy developments in the various sectors of education.
	Relevant links	http://www.qualityfoundation.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=275&Itemid=110&lang=en
	News story	http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info/news/successful-efquel-innovation-forum-spain
	Nature of input	Presentation given by Paul Bacsich from Sero entitled "Results as we near the end" and provided a summary of the main outcomes of the VISCED work up to September 2012 including the policy recommendations and success factors.
	Slideshare account	http://www.slideshare.net/VISCED/10-results-aswneartheend

11	Event title	EDEN Research workshop
	Date	22-23 October 2012
	Location	Leuven, Belgium
	Description	This biannual research event brings together researchers and in 2012 focussed on how students are driving teachers, instructors in the fields where new learning technologies play important role
	Relevant links	http://www.eden-online.org/eden-events/research-workshops/leuven.html
	News story	http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info/news/critical-success-factors-virtual-schools-presented-eden-conference
	Nature of input	Presentation given by Ilse Op De Beeck, from EFQUEL entitled "Virtual Schools and Colleges in Europe: Looking for Success Factors."
	Slideshare account	http://www.slideshare.net/VISCED/11-eden-lookingforsuccessfactors

12	Event title	iNACOL annual 2012 Virtual School Symposium
	Date	21 – 24 October, 2012
	Location	New Orleans, USA
	Description	This annual event brought together over 2,000 representatives from national, state, district, private, and other virtual school programs in the US and is considered to be the premier K-12 online and blended learning conference.
	Relevant links	http://vss2012.inacol.org/
	News story	http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info/news/european-virtual-school-and-college-research-presented-inacol
	Nature of input	Presentation given by Paul Bacsich from Sero entitled "Innovative Good Practice in Virtual Schooling in Europe". Attendance at this event also afforded Paul the opportunity to have a number of important meetings with researchers and others actively engaged in the North American Virtual School and College environment.
	Slideshare account	http://www.slideshare.net/VISCED/12-european-virtualschoolsinnovativepractice

13	Event title	Media & Learning
	Date	14-15 November
	Location	Brussels, Belgium
	Description	This international annual event focuses on the role and impact of media on teaching and learning and brings together researchers, practitioners and policy-makers.
	Relevant links	http://www.media-and-learning.eu/
	News story	http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info/news/virtual-schools-and-colleges-presentation-media-learning
	Nature of input	Presentation given by Giles Pepler from Sero entitled "The use of media in virtual schooling – findings from the VISCED project", VISCED also had a small stand at this event and it provided a first opportunity to distribute the recently published handbooks and brochures.
	Slideshare account	http://www.slideshare.net/VISCED/13-the-useofmediainvirtualschooling

14	Event title	Online Educa Berlin
	Date	28-30 November 2012
	Location	Berlin, Germany
	Description	Europe's largest international conference on technology enhanced teaching and learning aimed at the educational and training sectors.
	Relevant links	http://www.online-educa.com/
	News story	http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info/news/presentation-visced-online-educa-berlin
	Nature of input	Nikos Zygouritsas from Lambrakis Foundation gave a presentation on behalf of VISCED entitled "Virtual Schools as Innovative ICT-Enhanced Learning/Teaching Exemplar Initiatives: What Makes Things Work?",

		he also distributed handbooks and brochures and a separate presentation on VISCED was also given by Paul Bacsich from Sero during one of the pre-conference workshops.
	Slideshare account	http://www.slideshare.net/VISCED/14-visced-oebnz2

15	Event title	Finland Virtuaalikoulupäivät (Virtual Education Forum)
	Date	3-4 December 2012
	Location	Helsinki, Finland
	Description	This was the 10th National Virtual Education conference organised in Finland and brought together policy-makers and practitioners form all over Finland.
	Relevant links	http://www.oph.fi/opetushallitus/konferenssien_aineistoa/valtakunnalliset_virtuaaliopetuksen_paivat
	News story	http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info/news/national-virtual-education-conference-finland
	Nature of input	Merja Sjöblom from TIEKE introduced VISCED to participants by showing them around the main VISCED dissemination channels, the website and wiki and then distributing brochures. This was done by participating in TIEKE partner presentations and stands as is typical for this type of event in Finland
	Slideshare account	None

3. Annex containing presentation slides

Presentation 1 Investigating Innovative e-learning initiatives and Virtual Schools.

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Investigating Innovative e-learning initiatives and Virtual Schools

Nick Jeans, Sero Consulting
(nick.jeans@sero.co.uk)

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- Project funded by the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme.
- Aim: to make a worldwide inventory of innovative ICT-enhanced learning initiatives and major 'e-mature' secondary and post-secondary education providers for the 14-21 age group (including Virtual Schools and Colleges).

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- **Partners from 7 countries**:
- Sero Consulting Ltd, **UK**: www.sero.co.uk
- Lambrakis Research Foundation (LRF) **Greece**: www.lrf.gr
- EFQUEL (European Federation for Quality in E-Learning): www.efquel.org
- ATiT (Audiovisual Technologies, Informatics & Telecommunications) **Belgium**: www.atit.be
- MENON, European innovation and research network: www.menon.org
- University of Leeds, School of Education: www.education.leeds.ac.uk
- EITF (**Estonian** IT Foundation): http://www.eitsa.ee
- Ross Tensta Gymnasium, **Swedish** high school: www.tea.edu.stockholm.se
- Aarhus University (Dept of Information and Media) **Denmark**: www.imv.au.dk
- TIEKE, **Finnish** Information Society Development Centre: www.tieke.fi

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- focus on learners with inclusion issues and facilitating access to higher education.
- Success will be achieved by adapting, piloting and transferring innovative approaches which already exist in other countries outside the EU (or in the EU) but not widely known.

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- review validated by pilots at five schools in three countries
- outputs of the work will be analysed to identify success factors and teacher training recommendations - for policy-makers, advisors, government, education authorities and the e-learning industry

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- With school exclusions rising and authorities anxious about the NEETs issue (an anxiety heightened by the recent riots) Virtual Schools would seem to offer a useful solution.
- Yet leading provider Accipio has just gone into administration. Why are Virtual schools not taking off in UK or much of EU?

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- Virtual Schools successful and prolific in US (http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/US),
- Canada (http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Canada), Finland, Sweden, Belgium (http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Belgium). But not in UK, Denmark. Why?

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- InterHigh (claims to be UK's first online school) believes it has been denied wider recognition because education officials fear any endorsement of online teaching and learning will encourage parents to withdraw their children from school. http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/The_InterHigh_Story

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- Controlled assessment has replaced coursework in GCSEs
- Requirement for students to attend school or college for a number of supervised days difficult for those unable to leave home or hospital.
- Many virtual schools have switched to IGCSE ('I' = 'International') which is exam-only

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- Internationally, problems of:
- Technology (availability of internet, PCs, electricity)
- Terminology (virtual? Online? Out of school? HE? In poorer countries, many unis take on courses associated with FE in UK)
- Culture / pedagogy (teacher expected to be fount of all knowledge?)

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- **Factors predisposing towards virtual schools**
- Pervasive broadband (note African reliance on mobile phones)
- Long tradition of virtual education
- Long tradition of homeschooling (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homeschooling) which does not interpret 'school' to be place-bound (see Article 28 on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child - http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm)

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- **Factors predisposing towards virtual schools**
- Relaxed about leaving young teenagers to look after themselves, for periods of some hours (but not overnight)
- Low mother participation in workforce (http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/25/5/31743836.pdf)
- Country where parents do not (both) work long hours or have long travel times to work
- Country which does not have an extended family network

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- **Factors predisposing towards virtual schools**
- Large rural populations but strong desire to give as good an education to these as to children in cities
- Country aims to give as good an education to those of its population in specialist groups - citizens living outside the country, disabled children, hospital-bound children, religious and ethnic minorities
- Country with a standardised school curriculum (so that economies of scale can be leveraged)

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- To find out more about the VISCED project or to receive our bi-monthly online newsletter (with regular updates with worldwide news) visit our project website: www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info
- Find our research wiki at: www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.eu
- Contact us through visced@sero.co.uk

We look forward to hearing from you!

Presentation 2 Critical success factors and quality aspects for virtual schools.

Benchmarking and critical success factors for Virtual Schools

Professor Paul Bacsich
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Topics

1. Virtual Schools taxonomy
2. Virtual Schools in Europe
3. Benchmarking – latest on Pick&Mix
4. Mapping this to schools

1. Virtual Schools - taxonomy

Types of virtual school

- Pure full-service virtual school
  - Students "attend" only this school
- Supplemental virtual school
  - Students attend a f2f school usually for most of their provision but also attend this school
- Non-school virtual schooling provider
  - Offers virtual classes/courses but is not a school

2. Virtual Schools in Europe

an overview

Global view

- US: 250 virtual schools
- Canada: 30 virtual schools
- Australia: 3 – must be more
- New Zealand: 3?
- Caribbean: none (intrinsic to region)
- Latin America: several
- Africa: only a few
- India: not clear yet – rest of Asia?

Virtual Schools in Europe

- Academie en ligne
- Acadin.nl
- Beneyschool
- Bridge21
- Briteschool
- Devoirs.fr
- Escola Movel
- Escola virtual
- IScoil
- InterHigh School
- Kartelo
- Korrenspondensgymnasiet i Torsås
- Lo-net and Virtuelles Gymnasium Sonthofen
- *Notschool.net*
- Periplus Home Education
- REA college
- Satellite Virtual Schools
- Scuola B@rdi
- Sofia Distansundervisning
- The Maths Factor
- VUC Flex
- Virtuelle Schule
- Värmdö Distans
- Wolsey Hall

3. Benchmarking – Pick&Mix

The latest info

Benchmarking e-learning

- At national level, started in UK and New Zealand
  - Soon spread to Australia
  - Not closely linked initially to quality agenda
- At European level, developments include E-xcellence and UNIQUe
  - Later, developments in other projects
  - Increasingly, links made to quality agenda

Benchmarking e-learning (UK)

- Foreseen in HEFCE e-learning strategy 2005
- Higher Education Academy (HEA) oversaw it
- Four phases – 82 institutions – 5 methodologies
- Two consultant teams – BELA and OBHE
- Justified entry to HEA Pathfinder and Enhancement *National initiatives* - and useful for JISC initiatives also (Curriculum Design etc)
- Can be leveraged into update of learning and teaching strategy (e.g. Leicester U)

Pick&Mix overview

- Focussed on e-learning, not general pedagogy
- Draws on several sources and methodologies – UK and internationally (including US) and from college sector
- Not linked to any particular style of e-learning (e.g. distance or on-campus or blended)
- Oriented to institutions with notable activity in e-learning
- Suitable for desk research as well as “in-depth” studies
- Suitable for single- and multi-institution studies

Pick&Mix history

- Initial version developed in early 2005 in response to a request from Manchester Business School for an international competitor study
- Since then, refined by literature search, discussion, feedback, presentations, workshops, concordance studies and four phases of use – fifth and sixth phases now
- Forms the basis of the wording of the *Critical Success Factors* scheme for the EU Re.ViCa project
- Used in Distance Learning Benchmarking Club – and commercially
- Will form the basis of the wording of the *Critical Success Factors* scheme for the EU VISCED project

Pick&Mix

Criteria and metrics

Criteria

- Criteria are “statements of practice” which are scored into a number of performance levels from bad/nil to excellent
- It is wisest if these statements are in the public domain – to allow analysis & refinement
- *The number of criteria is crucial*
- Pick&Mix originally had a core of 20 – based on analysis from the literature (ABC, BS etc) and experience in many senior mgt scoring meetings

Pick&Mix Scoring

- Use a 6-point scale (1-6)
  - 5 (cf Likert, MIT90s levels) plus 1 more for “excellence”
- Contextualised by “scoring commentary”
- There are always issues of judging progress especially “best practice”
- The 6 levels are mapped to 4 colours in a “traffic lights” system
  - red amber olive green

Pick&Mix System: summary

- Has taken account of “best of breed” schemes
- Output and student-oriented aspects
- Methodology-agnostic but uses underlying approaches where useful (e.g. Chickering & Gamson, Quality on the Line, MIT90s)
- Requires no long training course to understand

Pick&Mix

Two sample criteria

P01 “Adoption” (Rogers)

1. Innovators only
2. Early adopters taking it up
3. Early adopters adopted; early majority taking it up
4. Early majority adopted; late majority taking it up
5. All taken up except laggards, who are now taking it up (or retiring or leaving)
6. First wave embedded, second wave under way (e.g. m-learning after e-learning)

P10 “Training”

1. No systematic training for e-learning
2. Some systematic training, e.g. in some projects and departments
3. Uni-wide training programme but little monitoring of attendance or encouragement to go
4. Uni-wide training programme, monitored and incentivised
5. All staff trained in VLE use, training appropriate to job type – and retrained when needed
6. Staff increasingly keep themselves up to date in a “just in time, just for me” fashion except in situations of discontinuous change

Benchmarking frameworks

- It is implausible that there will be a global scheme or even continent-wide schemes for benchmarking
- But common vocabulary and principles can be enunciated – e.g. for public criterion systems:
  - Criteria should be public, understandable, concise and relatively stable – and not politicised or fudged
  - Criteria choice should be justified from field experience and the literature
  - Core and supplementary criteria should be differentiated for each jurisdiction
  - Core criteria should be under 40 in number
  - The number of scoring levels should be 4, 5 or 6

Concordances

- *Mappings* between systems are hard and rarely useful (Bacsich and Marshall, *passim*)
- *Concordances* of systems are easier and helpful – e.g. to reduce the burden of benchmarking with a new methodology
  - Such approaches were used in the Distance Learning Benchmarking Club
  - for E-xcellence+/ESMU and ACODE

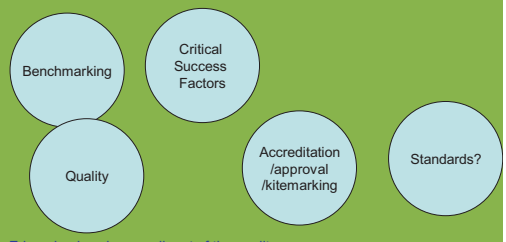
Experience on methodologies

- Methodologies do not survive without regular updating by a design authority
  - this is difficult in a leaderless group context
- Forking of methodologies needs dealt with by folding updates back to the core system
  - otherwise survival is affected
- Complex methodologies do not survive well
- A public criterion system allows confidence, transparency, and grounding in institutions

Relationship to Quality of e-Learning

My thoughts

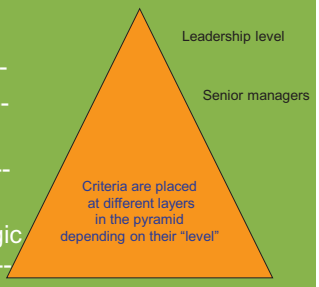
Too many concepts



E-learning is only a small part of the quality process – how can agencies and assessors handle five variants of the concept across many separate methodologies?

My view - the pyramid

- Critical Success Factors ----------
- Benchmarking ----
- Quality ----------
- Detailed pedagogic guidelines ----------



Benchmarking in practice – and the Distance Learning Benchmarking Club

Evidence and Process

Iterative Self-Review
for public criterion systems

The Iterative Self-Review Process

- For all the methodologies we deployed, we use an Iterative Self-Review Process
- The methodologies do NOT require it – it was what our UK institutions desired, for all the public criterion systems – strong resistance to documentary review
- It encourages a more senior level of participation from the institution: the result is *theirs*, not the assessors
- It allows them to get comfortable with the criteria as they apply to their institution
- And move directly to implementation of change
- But it selects against complex methodologies
- And requires more effort from assessors

Iterative Self-Review details

- Introductory meeting
- Initial collection of evidence
- Selection of supplementary criteria
- Mid-process meeting
- Further collection of evidence
- Scoring rehearsal meeting
- Final tweaks on and chasing of evidence
- Scoring meeting

- Reflection meeting – to move to change

How to handle evidence

- Have a "file" for each criterion
- Institutions normally group criteria according to their own L&T strategy or in terms of "owning" departments
  - We also supply some standard groupings, e.g. based on MIT90s, but few use these

Peer review

- Peer review exists in the Iterated Self Review model:
  - Specialist assessors (normally two nowadays) have experience in the sector
  - Often, the benchmarking is done in a benchmarking cohort and the leaders of each HEI in the cohort form a peer group

Distance Learning Benchmarking Club

- Started as a work package in the JISC Curriculum Delivery project DUCKLING at the University of Leicester - 2009
- A number (7) of institutions in UK and beyond were planned to be benchmarked
  - The aim was to baseline and then measure incremental progress in e-learning
  - For more details there is a brief public report and will be a presentation at Online Educa

Members

- University of Leicester (UK)
- University of Liverpool (UK)
- University of Southern Queensland (Australia)
- Massey University (NZ)
- Thompson Rivers University (Canada)
- Lund University (Sweden)
- KTH (Sweden)

Recent commercial activity

- Liverpool John Moores University - 2009
- Gotland University - 2010
- University of Northampton – just finished

4. Mapping this to schools

Benchmarking for schools?!

- Why could a benchmarking scheme for universities apply for schools?
  - It applies to university colleges and does not depend on the existence of research in the Uni
  - There seems no intrinsic embedding of HE concepts in the criteria
  - It applies to small institutions
  - US accrediting bodies have sector-wide accreditation schemes

The new (DL) core criteria

1. All systems usable, with internal evidence to back this up.
2. Regularly updated e-Learning Strategy, integrated with Learning and Teaching Strategy and all related strategies (e.g. Distance Learning, if relevant).
3. Effective decision-making for e-learning projects across the whole institution, including variations when justified.
4. All staff trained in VLE use, appropriate to job type – and retrained when needed.
5. A fit for purpose costing system is used in all departments for costs of e-learning.
6. Integrated annual planning process for e-learning integrated with overall course planning.
7. All staff engaged in the e-learning process have "nearby" fast-response technical support.
8. There is effective decision-making for e-learning programmes across the whole institution, including variations///
9. The capability of leaders to make decisions regarding e-learning is fully developed at departmental/institutional level.
10. The overall institutional management style is appropriate to manage its mix of educational and business activities
11. The institution has effective processes designed to achieve high formal and informal credibility with government etc
12. The e-learning system is as reliable as the main systems students and staff are used to from their wider experience …
13. Market research done centrally and in or on behalf of all departments, and aware of e-learning aspects; updated annually or prior to major programme planning.
14. A system where security breaches are known not to occur yet which allows staff and students to carry out their authorised duties easily and efficiently.
15. Students have good understanding of the rules governing assignment submission, feedback, plagiarism, costs, attendance, etc and always act on them.
16. Help Desk is deemed as best practice.
17. Frequent (ideally annual) Student Satisfaction survey which explicitly addresses the main e-learning issues of relevance to students.

04 and 06

- **04** Usability
  - All systems "usable", with internal evidence to back this up.
- **06** e-Learning Strategy
  - Regularly updated e-Learning Strategy, integrated with Learning and Teaching Strategy and all related strategies (e.g. Distance Learning, if relevant).

07 and 10

- **07** Decisions on Projects
  - Effective decision-making for e-learning (IT) projects across the whole institution, including variations when justified.
- **10** Training
  - All staff trained in "VLE" use, appropriate to job type – and retrained when needed.

12 and 13

- **12** Costs
  - A fit for purpose costing system (ABC-lite) is used in all departments for costs of e-learning.
- **13** Planning Annually
  - Integrated annual planning process for e-learning integrated with overall course planning.

16 and 19

- **16** Technical Support to Staff
  - All staff engaged in the e-learning process have "nearby" fast-response technical support.
- **19** Decisions on Programmes
  - There is effective decision-making for e-learning programmes across the whole institution, including variations when justified.

22 and 29

- 22 Leadership in e-Learning
  - The capability of leaders to make decisions regarding e-learning is fully developed at departmental and institutional level.
- 29 Management Style
  - The overall institutional management style is appropriate to manage its mix of educational and business activities

35 and 53

- 35 Relationship Management Upwards
  - The institution has effective processes designed to achieve high formal and informal credibility with relevant government and public agencies overseeing it.
- 53 Reliability
  - The e-learning system is as reliable as the main systems students and staff are used to from their wider experience as students and citizens,

58 and 60

- 58 Market Research
  - Market research done centrally and in or on behalf of all departments, and aware of e-learning aspects; updated annually or prior to major programme planning.
- 60 Security
  - A system where security breaches are known not to occur yet which allows staff and students to carry out their authorised duties easily and efficiently.

Student-facing criteria

- 91 Student Understanding of System
  - Students have good understanding of the rules governing assignment submission, feedback, plagiarism, costs, attendance, etc and always act on them.
- 92 Student Help Desk
  - Help Desk is deemed as best practice.
- 94 Student Satisfaction
  - Frequent (ideally annual) Student Satisfaction survey which explicitly addresses the main e-learning issues of relevance to students.

Much more can be said!

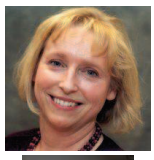
Professor Paul Bacsich
Sero Consulting Ltd and Matic Media Ltd

Presentation 3 International benchmarking. The first dual mode distance learning benchmarking club.

International benchmarking.
The first dual mode distance learning benchmarking club

Who are we…

Ebba Ossiannilsson
Lund University, SE

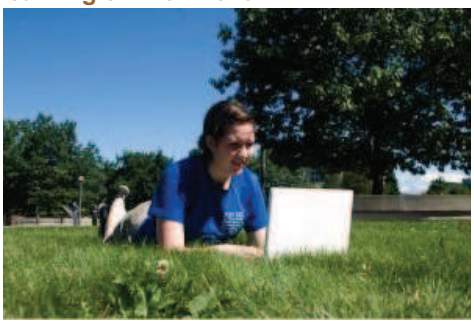


Margareta Hellström
KTH, SE

Paul Bacsich
Matic Media Ltd. UK

Andreas Hedrén
Gotland University, SE

Learning environment



Learning environment

"We are currently preparing students for jobs that don't yet exist… Using technologies that haven't been invented… In order to solve problems we don't even know are problems yet."

(Source: Fish & McLeod, Shift Happens, Wikispaces.com)

Foto: Anders Olsson, Lnu

New and emerging technologies...

© Steve Wheeler, University of Plymouth, 2011

...are often met with opposition.

Benchmarking, some definitions

Benchmarking is an exemplar-driven teleological process operating within an organization [sic] with the objective of intentionally changing an existing state of affairs into a superior state of affairs. (Moriarty, 2008, p. 30).

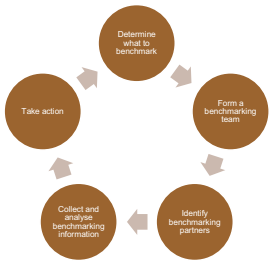
…the 'locus' of benchmarking lies between the current and desirable states of affairs and contributes to the transformation processes that realise these improvements. **(Moriarty and Smallman, 2009, p. 484)**

…is a technique, method, process, activity, incentive, or reward which conventional wisdom regards as more effective at delivering a particular outcome than any other technique, method, process, etc. when applied to a particular condition or circumstance

Self evaluation for quality enhancement

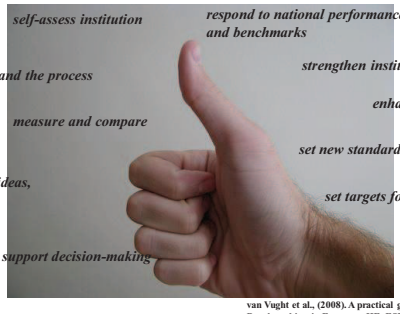
benchmark-careers.c

The Benhmarking process



Ossiannilsson, E. (2011). Findings from European benchmarking exercises on e-learning: value and impact. *CreativeEducation.2(3)*:208-219.

Benefits and values



self-assess institution

respond to national performance indicators and benchmarks

strengthen institutional identity

better understand the process

enhance reputation

measure and compare

set new standards for the sector

discover new ideas,

set targets for improvement

obtain data to support decision-making

van Vught et al., (2008). A practical guide. Benchmarking in European HE. ESMU

Limitations

Time?

Commitment?

Benchmarks?

Interpretations?

Language?

Who is involved?

The First dual-mode distance benchmarking club, partners

- **UK** University of Leicester (lead),
- **UK** University of Liverpool,
- **Australia** University of Southern Queensland
- **New Zeeland** Massey University
- **Canada** Thompson Rivers University
- **Sweden** Lund University
- **Sweden** KTH

- Gotland University was not in the club, but did the benchmarking with Pick&Mix

Pick&Mix

The Pick&Mix; *the iterative self-review process* with use of expert moderators

- Encourages a more senior level of participation from the institution: the result is “theirs”, not the moderators
- Get comfortable over time with the criteria as they apply to their institution
- Helps them move *directly* to implementation of change
- Selects against complex methodologies – not an issue with Pick&Mix as it is simple (compared with others)
- Requires more effort from moderators (Bacsich, 2011)

Critical success factors

Code	Criterion name
04	Usability
06	eLearning strategy
07	Decisions on Projects
10	Training
12	Costs
13	Planning Annually
16	Technical Support to Staff
19	Decisions on Programmes
22	Leadership in e-Learning
29	Management Style
35	Relationship Management Upwards
53	Reliability
58	Market Research
60	Security
91	Student Understanding of System
92	Student Help Desk
94	Student Satisfaction

06d	Distance Learning Strategy	Regularly updated Distance Learning Strategy, integrated with Learning and Teaching Strategy and all related strategies (e.g. e-Learning, if relevant).

Pick&Mix version 2.0 table

No.	Criterion name	MIT tag	K A	L B	M C	N D	O E	P F	Q G
5	Accessibility	Technology	2	3	2	1	1	3	2
8	Pedagogy	Individuals (Staff)	3	3	2	2	3	3	5
17	Quality Assurance	Processes	3	3	3	2	2	4	1
18	Staff Recognition and Reward	Individuals (Staff) (NOT Technology)	3	3	2	1	2	2	1
29	Management Style								
53	Reliability							2	2
58	Market Research								
62	Integration		1			3	1	2	
64	Plagiarism Avoidance		4						
70	Widening Participation		3	1	2	2		3	
72	Personalisation		2		2		2		
73	Eco-Sustainability								
75	Library Services e-Resources								
76	Information Literacy of Students								
80	Computer Based Assessment					2			
83	Staff Experience								

Meetings and process

Meeting	Aims of meeting
Initial meeting	Initial collection of evidence, and selection of supplementary criteria
Mid-process meeting	Further collection of evidence
Scoring rehearsal meeting	Final tweaks on and chasing of evidence
Scoring meeting	xxx
Reflection meeting	To move to change

Roadmap…

The First dual-mode distance benchmarking club

Tasks for Lund University, SE

- benchmark, in accordance with the detailed criteria
- consider the already defined and/or suggest any other *critical success factors*
- based on experience and results from EADTU's

 E-xcellence+ and ESMU's *ELBE* correlate *Pick&Mix* with those

Benchmarking projects conducted by Lund University, SE

- The Swedish National Agency of Higher Education, *ELQ*
- EADTU, *E-xcellence+* 
- ESMU, *Benchmarking eLearning exercise 2009* 
- The *First dual-mode distance learning benchmarking club (Concordance)*

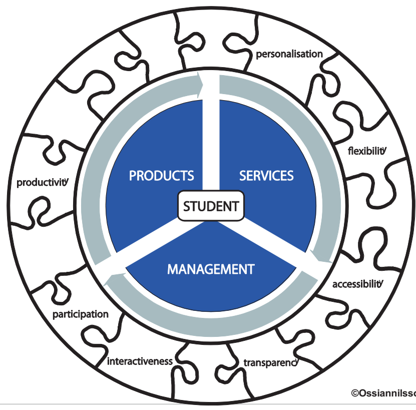
The Excellence project by the European Association o Distance Teaching Universities, EADTU

http://www.eadtu.nl/e-xcellencelabel

Benchmarking _models

EADTU_E-xcellence+	ESMU_ELBE	NAHE	Pick&Mix	LU suggested critical
Strategic Management	Strategic Management	Material/content	Usability	Accessibility
Curriculum design	Curriculum design	Structure/virtual environment	eLearning Strategy	Computer Based Asse
Course design	Course design	Communication, cooperation and interactivity	Decision on Projects	Constructive Alignme
Course delivery	Course delivery	Student assessment	Training	Democratic Processes
Staff support	Staff support	Flexibility and adaptability	Costs	Eco-Sustainability
Student support	Student support	Support (student and staff)	Planning annually	Employability
		Staff qualifications and experience	Technical Support to Staff	ePortfolios
		Vision and institutional leadership	Decision on Programmes	Information Literacy c
		Resource allocation	Leadership in eLearning	Integration
		The holistic and process aspects	Management Style	Interactiveness
			Relationship Management Upwards	Learning Material
			Reliability	Legal Security
			Market Research	Library Services and e
			Security	Market Research
			Student Understanding of System	Organisational Learni
			Student Help Desk	Participation
			Student Satisfaction	Pedagogy
			Distance eLearning Strategy	Personalisation
				Plagiarism
				Productivity
				Quality Assurance
				Reliability
				Services; Staff and Stu
				Staff Recognition and
				Strategic Managemen
				Transparency
				Widening Participatio

The columns above represent from left to right the six areas (with 33 benchmarks) of EADTU:s *E-xcellence+* and ESMU:s *ELBE*, the quality aspects of the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, the *Pick&Mix* core criteria (18) and finally the suggested critical success areas from Lund University. The colors show a rough estimation of concordance between the various models. As can be seen, certain new critical success areas (in white) are suggested from Lund University.



©Ossiannilsson & Landgren, 2011

KTH 1…

Ask each of the respondents to value each criterion not only on level 1- 6 but also do this for 4 different organizational levels

- Individual/or course level
- Departmental level
- "School "level
- Institutional /or "KTH" level.

KTH 2…

- Illuminated "**islands**" with very advanced and high quality distance e-learning existed. Internal information about their work was not reaching outside their group.
- At the same time "**dark corners**" that had not even thought of the possibility to use new technologies to enhance their student's learning or to try blended learning models for more flexibility were found.
- KTH could learn from studying **successful e-learning initiatives within its organization** from departments that have worked for years in different online initiatives and to develop blended learning models.
- **Reports** but also as a **seminar series**, were the results could be discussed and good examples disseminated locally.

KTH 3…

Eighteen (18) new core criteria were chosen and grouped in the following areas:

Student involvement

Educational/Pedagogical anchoring

Staff recognition and reward

Open Educational Resources

Gotland University

- Find suggestions on how **to strengthen the institution's e-learning**.
- The Pick&Mix method was the expected possibility to **relatively quickly**, with a relatively small effort, without access to own experts in e-learning get a **good view and understanding of the current state of the institution's e-learning.**
- Give results that would be **straight forward to use** to find suggestions on what aspects of the institutions e-learning to address and what to do in order to improve.
- A key aspect that was found appealing when making the decision to use Pick&Mix was the **easily understood and concrete (critical) success factors**

Gotland University 2

- Gotland University had a few specific issues that needed to be addressed for locally specific reasons.
- The nature of these issues differed from the benchmarking success factors so these issues were addressed in parallel but separately.

Gotland University 3…

- In a few cases …**not straight forward to identify the University's score for the success factors.** This was mostly from institution internal reasons. The effect of this was that the benchmarking exercise made it clear that there was interesting information that was not easily accessible at the institution.
- The use of Pick&Mix…relatively straight forward and very useful and easy to use the output from the method **to suggest changes to achieve improvements**
- Identify the **state of it's e-learning** on a somewhat absolute scale and to identify what aspects and areas of it's e-learning that needs most improvement and also what measures is needed to achieve the identified improvements

Three key conclusions from the benchmarking exercise were that…

1. Only Thompson Rivers University has any strong expertise in market research for e-learning, not only in the Club but out of all the institutions benchmarked with Pick&Mix

2. No institution has strong competence in costing e-learning

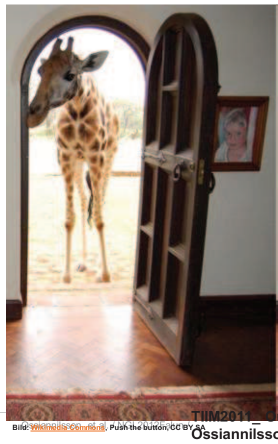
3. Staff reward and recognition for e-learning is not adequate anywhere.

Conclusion on methodology and benchmarking outcomes 1

- The political message is that such clubs are useful and that one could be easily set up in the Scando-Baltic region
- Issues raised above could be handled by different wording appropriate to the national languages and cultures within a common conceptual scheme for example as developed by Lund University.

Conclusion on methodology and benchmarking outcomes 2

- Co-operations like the distance learning benchmarking club can play a role on an **inter-institutional level, both nationally and internationally,** in the absence of any national level governing.
- Through co-operations like the distance learning benchmarking club institutions could **network, share knowledge, increase their competence and strengthen their e-learning**.
- The dissemination of Pick&Mix through the work pursued within the club has created a **knowledge foundation that can be taken further to both be used within the institutions of the club and also to involve more institutions.**

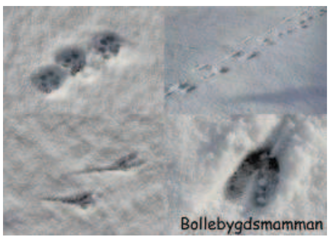


The door is open …

What next?

TIIM2011_ Oulu_Ebba Ossiannilsson 29 June

Ebba Ossiannilsson, Paul Bacsish, Margareta Hellström, Andreas Hedrén



Footprints

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Presentation 4 Analytic conceit or operational necessity? Towards the Multiversity - An integrated view of where we are in the world of e-learning.

Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme

UC UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha
CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

Analytic conceit or operational necessity?
Towards the Multiversity
An integrated view of where we are in the world of e-learning

Paul Bacsich
Canterbury Fellow 2012
Director, Matic Media Ltd
Senior Consultant, Sero
Project Manager on EU projects

DEANZ
The New Zealand association for professionals working in flexible, open and networked education

Paul Bacsich - projects

- **Former Research Director, Re.ViCa – virtual campuses (tertiary)**
- Project Manager, VISCED – Virtual Schools and Colleges (pre-tertiary)
- Benchmarking Consultant, Higher Education Academy and beyond
- Project Manager, POERUP – national policies for OER uptake
- Other projects on retention, funding etc
- Canterbury Fellow, UC College of Education

EACEA
Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency

Analytic methodologies (this topic)

- Comparative education (countries and institutions)
- Benchmarking (institutions or groups of institutions)
- Costs and time studies
- Retention, funding, quality etc

World tour no. 1 (complete?)

RE ViCA

- Virtual universities/polytechnics
- Definitions:
  - Virtual = more or less fully distance
  - Hybrid = mostly distance, some f2f (eg Saturday schools, study centres, etc)
  - Dual-mode = "half" is virtual, other half f2f

Virtual universities/polytechnics 1

Teaching all (or almost all) at a distance:

- Many countries have a "state" single-mode provider – an open university

Virtual universities/polytechnics 2

- US an "in-depth" success (Sloan) – (Edu)cause?
- Many other countries eg UK, Australia, Canada etc – in fact most – have many dual-mode providers – as in New Zealand too
- Virtual unis/polys go well beyond OECD and BRIC, right across Latin America, Middle East (AOU), Iran, India, Bangladesh, Thailand, China (in profusion), Japan less so but growing fast; bit patchy across Europe – plus New Zealand (TOPNZ)

"Failures" (ceased, faded)

- UK e-University – Select Committee report
- Scottish Knowledge, Interactive University - silence
- Most (not all) university e-learning consortia
- Dutch Digital University, Finnish VU (faded)
- Several US and other virtual university consortia
- Others, "buried so deep..."
  - Regional politics

And partial failures

- DL "in trouble across the world" from govts (says President of ICDE) – Middle East, Latin America, UK, Sweden, NZ, etc
- Many DL operations within UK universities never achieve "second stage ignition" (Bacsich, passim)
  - Where's the "fusion engine"? (Brown 2012)
- The Campus does not "wither away", ever
- Dutch Ou – some "blips"
- But some Canadian organisations reconfigure and then thrive – TechBC>SFU, OLA>TRU

Successes

- UKOU – not just a uni
- Open Universities Australia (discuss – is it the only consortium that works?)
- Several other Australian unis
- **Too soon to tell: OER u**

EACEA Education and Culture DG Lifelong Learning Programme

POERUP

World tour no. 2 – virtual schools (in progress – 1 year to go)

- **Virtual schools** - and virtual schooling - in profusion in US and Canada
- Also in Australia and New Zealand (TCS)
- Less visible in Caribbean - and Oceania?
- "Thought" to be few and/or to have died out in Europe – NOT TRUE (50+)
- Also in Latin America – link to national exams?
- Asia much less clear – language/culture barriers but signs in Korea and Japan. China?

Three virtual schools to ponder

VISCED
A Transnational Appraisal of Virtual School and College Provision

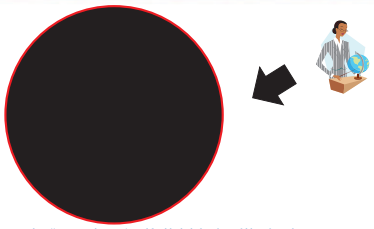
- Sofia Distans – Sweden (more asynch)
  - http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Sofia_Distans undervisning - started for diplomat's kids
- Interhigh – Wales (more synch)
  - http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/InterHigh
- Brisbane School of Distance Education - Australia
  - http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info/news/brisbane-school-distance-education-0 - note OER!!
- If they can do it why can't unis?

(second half of talk)

BACK TO UNIVERSITIES

Universities – is time running out?

The singularity



http://www.google.co.nz/search?q=black+hole+picture&hl=en&prmd=imvns&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=rC6CT4rtOM4e4iQeWk42hBA&ved=0CDYQsAQ&biw=1340&bih=622

The inflection point

Spaghetti junction

?

http://www.google.co.nz/search?q=spaghetti+junction&hl=en&prmd=imvns&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=HTKCT4HKEs-jiAeC4aibBA&ved=0CFAQsAQ&biw=1340&bih=622

University crises – the "perfect storm"?

- Should their focus be broad or narrow?
- Lack of clarity on purpose – for the nation(s) and for students and their parents
- Retention – bad in many countries
- Funding – governments can't/won't pay
- Effectiveness – death of liberal arts?
- Research – role, funding and relevance to teaching
- Will foreign students continue? And why?
- When will the "rite of passage" become too costly?

Retention (drop-out)

- A problem in universities in many countries (OECD)
- Usually worse when distance learning and/or adult students are involved
- Often not so much of a problem to the students as to the universities or Ministry
  - Because students may want to exit and maybe return later – or use part-qualifications as entry to a job
- New developments such as content-rich courses and modular funding are likely to make it worse
  - But OER may improve things!

Quality

- Often used to *fob off* questions, not resolve them
- Too important to be left *only* to institutions
- Too important to be left *only* to nations
- International standards for some qualifications?
- Do need a special scheme for e-learning but correlated with general guidelines
- Institutional guidelines too
- No need for separate scheme for OER – and no energy for that in most institutions

Effectiveness and study time

- "Academically Adrift" (Arum & Roksa) in US suggests that students come out of "university" with analytic skills not much better than those they came in with:
  - They do not do nearly enough reading and writing of long assignments – as they used to (says grandad)
- In England, student study times have dwindled and vary widely between institutions and courses (HEPI, OU for HEFCE) –lower than in much of Europe yet for a BA Hons of just 3 years
  - Are there any full-time students in UK?

(incremental change)

SOLUTIONS

We must put right the analytic weakness on costs and time

- Outside the US, in many countries there is no overall articulated and evidenced case for blended learning on-campus that is acceptable to "full time" students yet cost-effective long term in these days of adversity
- Why is so little work done by us on costs of (e-) learning?
- And almost no work by you on time issues for students and staff:
  - *The cost- and time-effectiveness of online learning*, Proceedings of Microlearning 2011 (to appear soon)

Study time

- Do studies on study time to ensure that students, parents and ministers are not short-changed
  - Part of "knowing your students" (now and in future)
- Can a 4-year honours programme resist for long the pressure to make it 3-year as in England? To do a 4:3 compression would require e-learning unless vacations (thus growing up) are sacrificed

Effectiveness – make them think

- Reconceptualise assessment (good idea anyway)
- Ensure students can assimilate large amounts of information, analyse it and communicate their conclusions verbally, and in printed reports and presentations, to the satisfaction of employers (21st century skills – even if a bit late)
  - Applies to all subjects in relevant ways

Know your current and future students

- There is always a role for market research techniques – especially when students pay fees but even when the state pays all costs (each is still competing, with other HEIs for government funding)
- Student satisfaction is only one dimension of understanding students
- Must also understand their life situation

Research-teaching links

- Research has value for the nation but not necessarily for all students/courses/institutions
- The elite universities have so far managed to avoid any detailed analysis of the research-teaching synergies – but can this last?
- More studies are needed on the finances of tertiary institutions and to what purposes student funds and other moneys are put (cf. TRAC in UK)
- The "research institute" (separate institution) model might be worth detailed investigation

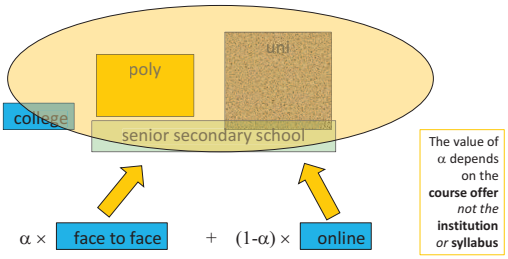
Breadth

- The evidence from the for-profit sector ↑ suggests that breadth of provision beyond "traditional" HE is key to (commercial) success of e-learning
- But can this be a route for research-led institutions (RLIs) under the cosh of PBRC, ERA, REF etc?
- There is a role for specialised institutions (e.g. art & design), though many are being absorbed
- Should RLIs mentor/own specialised institutions including more vocational ones? Look at UTCs/charter schools

But all this is still tinkering and issue-avoidance...

WHERE IS THE STEP-CHANGE THROUGH THE SINGULARITY?

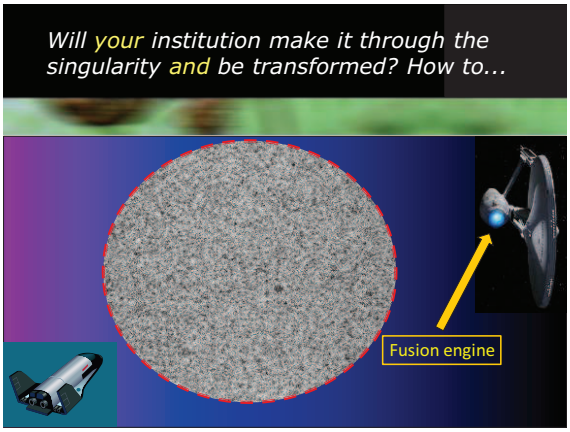
Vision: The Multeversity



www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Multeversity

Multeversity features

- Broad-spectrum yet full university range of features
- Multi-mode according to student demand: pure DL, hybrid e/f2f, trad f2f+e (if really justified); multi-site if need be
- Highly cost-aware yet pricing transparent to clients
- Covering synergistic poly/college areas (e.g. Cisco Academy)
- Bridging into and from upper secondary school, so as to minimise drop-out and yet leverage on schools-level knowledge
- Generating "liberal arts" thinkers yet (e-)business-ready
- Linking with international partners to lobby governments and ensure true benchmarkable quality
- Joining with other unis/employers to set school-leaving exams



Key URLs

- http://revica.europace.org/Handbook.php
- http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Re.ViCa
- http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info
  - http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info/project/outcomes
- http://poerup.referata.com/wiki/POERUP (OER)
- http://www.mendeley.com/profiles/paul-bacsich/
- Learner Use of OER (LUOERL):
  - https://oerknowledgecloud.com/sites/oerknowledgecloud.com/files/LUOERLfinalreport.pdf

Makes me think (about e-learning!) Dominion Post today

- **"The digital revolution is transforming the halls of learning"** (Brown 2012)
- "Pacific Fibre confident of cable funding"
- "Kiwi author Perkins tipped to take Booker literary prize"
- "A man's solidarity with Jim, built on timber"
- "Give the chop to managers and save Kiwi diplomats"
- (and the Select Committee)

Presentation 7 The (different) news from VISCED: Virtual Schooling for all ages And what universities can learn from that.

Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme

UC UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

The (different) news from VISCED:
Virtual Schooling for all ages
And what universities can learn from that

Paul Bacsich
Senior Consultant, Sero
Canterbury Fellow 2012
Director, Matic Media Ltd
Project Manager on EU projects VISCED and POERUP

Paul Bacsich - projects

- *Former Research Director, Re.ViCa – virtual campuses (tertiary)*
- Project Manager, VISCED – Virtual Schools and Colleges (pre-tertiary)
- Benchmarking Consultant, Higher Education Academy, Wales and Sweden
- Project Manager, POERUP – national policies for OER uptake – and LUOERL
- Other projects on retention, funding etc
- Canterbury Fellow, College of Education

EACEA
Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency

VISCED – Virtual Schools and Colleges for Teenagers and Young Adults

VISCED
A Transnational Appraisal of Virtual School and College Provision

- **Funded under EU LLP KA3 ICT**
- January 2011 to December 2012 inclusive
- Lambrakis, Sero, ATiT, MENON, EFQUEL etc
- Leverages on Re.ViCa, and a basis for POERUP

What is a virtual school?

- An institution that teaches courses entirely or primarily through distance online methods
- With courses which are similar (in purpose and outcome) to those normally taken by school-age children: ISCED 2 and 3
  - lower/upper secondary – junior/senior high
- *Our age focus (in funding terms) is 14-21*
- Making it real: So that's Interhigh – video

World tour on virtual schools (in progress – 6 months to go)

- Virtual schools - and virtual schooling - exist in profusion in US (500?) and Canada (50?)
- Also in Australia and New Zealand (Te Kura)
- **"Thought" to be few and/or to have died out in Europe – NOT TRUE (50 or more)**
  - **And a network of nearly 50 in Finland**
- Also in Latin America; but less visible in Caribbean and Oceania
- Asia much less clear to us. Help wanted now!

Three virtual schools to ponder

VISCED
A Transnational Appraisal of Virtual School and College Provision

- Sofia Distans – Sweden (more asynch)
  - http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Sofia_Distans_undervisning - started for diplomats' kids
  - Only 2 more in Sweden
- Interhigh – Wales (more synch) (10 in UK)
  - http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/InterHigh
- Escola Movel – Portugal
  - http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Escola_Movel (being updated)
  - Any more in Portugal? Why not?

Virtual schools for adults

- Many virtual schools in US and some in Europe also cater for adults (e.g. UK, Finland)
- This is so that adults can get school-leaving qualifications to make them suitable to enter professions or study at university
- In the UK there are around 10 providers of online "GCSE" (school leaving) and "A levels" (uni entrance), mainly but not wholly for 21+

Cost-effectiveness

- A study for Sero by George Watley of University of Northampton claims, that for England:
  - "people earning a [university entrance] qualification exclusively through distance learning could do so at a cost between 9 and 38 percent of school-based learning, a potential saving of 62 to 91 percent in comparison to current funding given to traditional schools!"
- This caused substantial discussion at the European Virtual Schools Colloquium in Sheffield!
- Some backing for the general thrust of these figures from other countries (US, Scotland, India, etc)

Recommendations – for school-age children

- Virtual schools have been shown to be effective and no more costly than f2f schools
- Yet in most EU countries virtual schools are rare
  - Most common in countries with lighter regulation
- So... Governments should ensure that their regulations for schools do not explicitly or implicitly discriminate against virtual schools
  - In particular, consider their restrictive approach to "home education" (e.g. Germany, Netherlands, ...)
  - Virtual schools are NOT home education, they are schools (just as open universities are universities)

More interesting – recommendations for adults

- Universities and their researchers (us/you) should consider long and hard why virtual schools in EU have been set up easily and cheaply in techno-pedagogic terms, yet universities in EU mostly struggle to deliver substantial distance learning and insist on doing large numbers of pilots and studies before making choices
- Governments should reverse their neglect of non-university education for adults and in particular foster the development of adult-focused online teaching of school-leaving qualifications

Implications for universities and governments

- The various "fudges" to allow older adults to enter university without adequate qualifications could then be swept away
- All students could then enter university with relevant and up to date school-leaving qualifications
- Drop-out would be reduced, thus retention improved
- Quality of graduates would increase (e.g higher skill for "critical thinking") – NB Academically Adrift
- Perhaps in some countries overall course length at university could then be reduced?

Conclusions as slogans

- "Return to study" gives you a tradeable qualification for the first time
- *Virtual college first, then to virtual university*
- Many other advantages, but one usually does not mention "system costs" and "non-statal providers" to an EU academic audience...
- Maybe I had better leave the room now!

Paul Bacsich

Project Manager, VISCED

Presentation 8 Virtual Schooling & the Future of Education Is there a European way?

VISCED
A Transnational Appraisal of Virtual School and College Provision

Virtual Schooling & the Future of Education
Is there a European way?

PIXEL Conference, The Future of Education, Florence, 7-8 June 2012

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How do you imagine Virtual Schooling?

ISOLATION?

LACK OF CONTROL ON CONTENT AND PUPILS PROTECTION

IT IS NOT FIT FOR EUROPE!

?

THE FACE TO FACE CONTACT IN LEARNING!

INDIVIDUALISM VS COMMUNITY BUILDING?

LACK OF SOCIALISATION

DISTANCE LEARNING FOR KIDS AND TEEN AGERS???

What is a virtual school?

"a state approved and/or regionally accredited school that offers secondary credit courses through distance learning methods that include Internet-based delivery" (Clark (2000)

"an institution that teaches courses entirely or primarily through online methods (wikipedia)

"educational facilities that are not a physical location, but rather are located on the Internet. The primary difference between a virtual school and a stand-alone brick and mortar school is the latter's physical interactions among teachers, staff and students.

www.ehow.com

VISCED project aim

- Make an **inventory** and carry out a transnational **appraisal** of Virtual Schools and Colleges in Europe (& the world) age 14-21
- Investigate Innovative ICT-enhanced learning/teaching **exemplar initiatives**
- **Consult** stakeholders, engage with the schools
- Produce **Policy Recommendations**

VISCED project

- Open to researchers and policy makers
- All outputs published on public wiki
- Bi-monthly newsletter

- 2-year project started on 1 January 2011
- Funding by European Commission through Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP)

Virtual Schools in Europe

- A broad review of existing initiatives across Europe (& the world)
- Eight case studies & a European Colloquium of EU «Virtual Schools»

Virtual Schools in Europe: WHY?

INCLUSION as the main driver

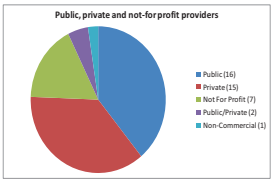
school-phobic, excluded, drop out, travellers, young parents, pregnancy, bullying, in care, hospitalized, etc

Virtual Schools in Europe: HOW?

- Blended to face2face, classroom
- Phenomenon-based learning (the paradox of virtual vs real school!)
- Learner-centred

Virtual Schools in Europe: WHO?

- Public Initiatives
- Private providers
- Civil society associations,
- NGOs
- Differently framed within national systems



Some Virtual Schools

• Audentes	> Estonia
• Bednet	> Belgium
• Briteschool	> England
• European Virtual Schools	> Europe
• Interhigh	> Wales
• iScoil	> Ireland
• Notschool	> England/UK>
• Otavanopisto	> Finland
• Rīgas Tālmācības vidusskola	> Latvia
• Satellite Virtual Schools	> England
• Sofia Distans	> Sweden
• Varmdo Distans	> Sweden
• Wereldschool	> Netherlands

So what about European Virtual Schools?

- Fulfil uncovered needs
- Tell us something on ICT for learning
- Are bound to the local context and rooted in the community
- Most and for all, don't like to be labelled as «virtual schools»

Some Policy Issues

- Do existing Legislative Frameworks disadvantage virtual schooling?
- Are there tensions between sovereign states and EU (State v Federal?)?
- Quality assurance? Common standards? Autonomy and innovation? Are these exclusive?
- Accreditation? Cross-border recognition? Who 'owns' the qualifications?
- Funding? Cross-border funding?
- Attitudes to Open Educational Resources? Govt? EC? Content providers?
- Public Opinion? Is this how Virtual Schooling is viewed in some countries...

VISCED

A Transnational Appraisal of Virtual School and College Provision

Want to know more?

www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info

Wiki: www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.eu

Bi-monthly newsletter

Thank you!

dproli@scienter.org

Presentation 9 Virtual schooling in Europe: Removing the policy traps.
VISCED:A Transnational Appraisal of Virtual School and College Provision.

VISCED
A Transnational Appraisal of Virtual School and College Provision

Virtual schooling in Europe:

Removing the policy traps. VISCED:

A Transnational Appraisal of Virtual School and College Provision

website: http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info/

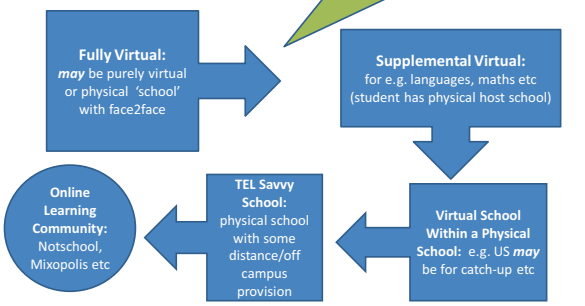
wiki: http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Main_Page

barry.phillips@sero.co.uk

VISCED
A Transnational Appraisal of Virtual School and College Provision

VISCED aims *"to make an inventory and to carry out a systematic review of international and national levels of innovative ICT-enhanced learning/teaching 'Exemplar' initiatives and 'e-mature' major secondary and post-secondary education providers for the 14-21 age group (including Virtual Schools and Colleges)."*

Developing a typology for VISCED: The five level description



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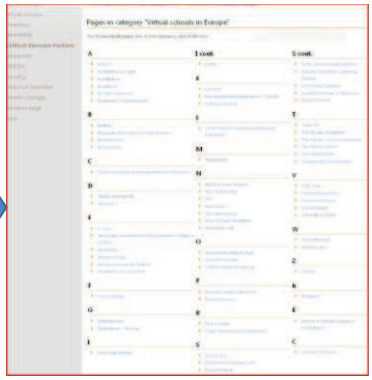
68 'Virtual Schools'*

Across 18 European countries*

From 25-1,400 students*

Mean is c470*



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Virtual Schools in Europe: Profiles - headlines

- Student numbers/enrolments from 10s to 1,000+ and (potentially) 1,000s
- **Public, Private, Public/Private, Not-for-Profit**
- **Mainstream – full or wide curriculum coverage**
- **Mainstream – niche subjects**
- **Inclusion – variety of target groups**
- Revision/catch-up
- Expatriates/cultural/language needs
- Continuing education (beyond school leaving)
- Geographical isolation *usually combined with another factor – not typically the primary motivation
- **Pedagogy: broad spectrum – 100% online > significant face-to-face**

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A Transnational Appraisal of Virtual School and College Provision

Policy Traps

- **Do existing Legislative Frameworks disadvantage virtual schooling? (Is it legal? PE?)**
- **Are there tensions between sovereign states and EU (State v Federal)?**
- **Quality assurance? Common standards – courses? TT?**
- **Inspection regimes?**
- **Cross-border 'safeguarding'?**
- **Accreditation? Validation?**
- **Who 'owns' the qualifications?**
- **Funding? Cross-border funding?**
- **OER? OE? OA?**
- **Public Opinion?**
- **Exacerbating inequality?**

Policy Opportunities

- **EC priority area – inclusion**
  - **children of a migrant background**
  - **travelling - itinerant - transient**
  - **tackling early school leaving**
  - **school-phobic**
  - **excluded/at risk of exclusion**
  - **geographically isolated.**
  - **sick/hospitalised**
  - **credit recovery**
  - **requiring support for transition to HE**
  - **young offenders – in custody > on release**
  - **common language/cultural needs/connections**
  - **young parents with childcare responsibilities**
- **EU wide niche demands**
  - **expatriates/children of service personnel overseas**
  - **elite athletes**
  - **curriculum gaps**
  - **revision/acceleration**
- **Rich data potential**
- **Driving broadband uptake**

Presentation 10 Results as we near the end.

VISCED

A Transnational Appraisal of Virtual School and College Provision

Results as we near the end

Paul Bacsich
Sero Consulting Ltd
UK

VISCED project aim

- Make an **inventory** and carry out a transnational **appraisal**, of…
- Innovative ICT-enhanced learning/teaching **exemplar initiatives** with an off-campus orientation, with a focus on…
- **Virtual Schools and Colleges**, in the…
- **14-21** age range of students.

VISCED project

- Open to researchers and policy makers
- All outputs published on public wiki
- Bi-monthly newsletter
- Regular tweets – hashtag #visced
- 2-year project started on 1 January 2011, ends 31 December 2012
- Funding by European Commission through Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) KA3 ICT

VISCED partners

What is a virtual school?

- An institution that teaches courses entirely or primarily through distance online methods
- With courses which are similar (in purpose and outcome) to those normally taken by school-age children: ISCED 2 and 3
  - lower/upper secondary – junior/senior high
- *Our age focus (in funding terms) is 14-21*
- Making it real: So that's Interhigh – video

Specific outputs

- Set of country reports at three levels
  - Full
  - Intermediate
  - Brief (on all other countries and many states)
- Entries on 500+ virtual schools
- Brochure
- Handbook
- Presentations and papers

Handbook – two volumes

- Volume 1 (available in print/web in November):
  - World Tour
  - Case studies
  - Pilots
  - Policy options
- Volume 2 (finalised in December):
  - Teacher training
  - Innovative practices
  - Critical success factors
  - Policy recommendations

World tour of virtual schools

- Virtual schools - and virtual schooling - exist in profusion in US (500?) and Canada (50?)
- Also in Australia and New Zealand (Te Kura)
- **"Thought" to be few and/or to have died out in Europe – NOT TRUE (70 or more)**
- Also in Latin America; but less visible in Caribbean and Oceania
- Very few in Africa (north and south only)
- Asia much less clear to us – some now emerging

Case studies – 3 of 10

- Sofia Distans – Sweden (more asynch)
  - http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Sofia_Distansundervisning - started for diplomats' kids
  - Only 2 more in Sweden
- Interhigh – Wales (synch) (another 10 in UK)
  - http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/InterHigh
- Escola Móvel (Ensino a Distância para a Itinerância) – Portugal
  - http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Escola_Movel
- Summary of each case study in Handbook

Interhigh – key points

- Established in 2005 for students aged 11-16, up to GCSE
- From 23 students to 200 by 2009
- Private school registered as a not-for-profit company
- Most pupils live in the UK; the rest are expatriate children living abroad
- Particularly beneficial for children unable to settle at mainstream schools, including children with Asperger's and otherinclusion issues
- Pupils study online mainly from home; staff do most teaching from home
- Lessons follow the National Curriculum with internal tests to assess progress.
- Pupils are encouraged to use social networking sites to chat to friends, help each other with work and make new friends
- The virtual classroom is built around an interactive whiteboard and uses customised web and video conferencing software
- Recently, InterHigh has expanded by launching new business divisions

Success Factors (in progress)

- Team of Sero, EFQUEL and KU Leuven
- Candidates for success factors:
  1. Strong leadership skills and competences
  2. Clarity of the organisational system underpinning the operation of the school or college
  3. Appropriateness of recruitment and training policies
  4. Robust and reliable technical infrastructure
  5. Strong emphasis on learning outcomes - often on an individual basis
  6. Usability of the system for supporting students, teachers etc
  7. Extent to which a clear e-learning strategy is in place
  8. Extent to which regular evaluation is in place
  9. Availability of appropriate digital learning resources

Policy recommendations

1. Raise awareness of value/impact of virtual schooling in meeting education/social policies
2. Identify, advise and collaborate with other government departments, agencies and organisations responsible for the education of children/young people
3. Remove any unnecessary bureaucratic impediments which inhibit the development and sustainability of virtual schools and colleges
4. Develop a policy for the 'ownership' of online qualifications across EU Member States
5. Collect & collate the figures for students on virtual courses (full time/supplementary)
6. Introduce a common set of guidelines for online teaching; ensure that nations are supported when integrating these into teacher training/teacher assessment regimes
7. Encourage and advise virtual schools and colleges to exploit OERs
8. Encourage policies which offer roll-on-roll-off provision for students who are struggling with the pace and content of their current curriculum
9. Take note of the wider potential for virtual schooling to drive internet take-up, promote the information society, e-government and student (and parent) ICT skills.

Links

- Project website: www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info
- Wiki: www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.eu
- Bi-monthly newsletter

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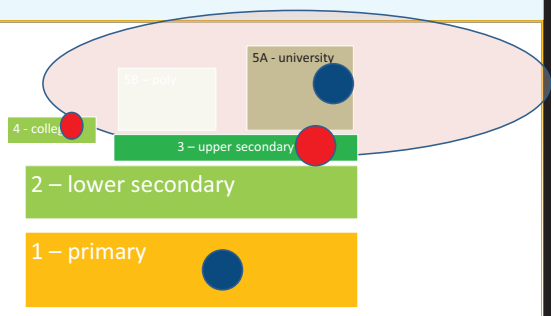
A Transnational Appraisal of Virtual School and College Provision

Alternative models of (formal) education delivery – IITE study

Where virtual schools live in the archetypes universe

Sectoral coverage (ISCED)



1. Virtual **supplementary** school

- Focus on uniform high-quality provision of university-entrance subjects across the nation
  - E.g. Maths, Physics, Computer Science, Latin
- State-funded
- Each pupil has host physical school
- Existence proof: US, Scotland, virtual schools for expats
- Advantages?
- Disadvantages?
- Policy shift: need per-course not per- pupil school funding - feasible

3. OER **C** (=college)

- Massive use of OER (if there) and automated and peer assessment to deliver "trade" qualifications at low cost **but** with international or vendor certification
- Finesses the HE quality issue but still targets those skills demanded by employers
- Regime to ensure acceptance by regular correlation of approach with test results
- Existence proof: A number of start-ups targeting the "lucrative"(?) HE market but making it hard for themselves by challenging or ignoring the quality police (both strategies unwise)
- Advantages?
- Disadvantages?
- Policy shift: really just needs governments to admit that non-HE post-secondary exists as a viable sector

4. Multeversity (Bacsich, 2011)

- Broad-spectrum yet full university range of work/features
- Multi-mode according to student demand: pure DL, hybrid e/f2f, traditional f2f+e (if really justified); multi-site if need be
- Highly cost-aware yet transparent to clients
- Covers polytechnic (university of applied science, university college) and post-secondary college areas synergistic (Cisco Academy, fashion design)
- Bridges into and from upper secondary school, so as to minimise drop-out and "lock on" to schools-level knowledge
- Generates "liberal arts" thinkers who are "(e-)business-ready"
- Links with international partners to lobby governments & set up transnational quality regimes to finesse ranking & price snobbery
- Joins with other universities and employer groups to oversee school-leaving exams within an increasingly international perspective on qualifications after school (IBac, IGCSE) and after university (HE Olympiads?)


VISCED
A Transnational Appraisal of
Virtual School and College Provision
Thank you for listening!
Paul Bacsich
Sero Consulting Ltd
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Twitter @pbacsich

Presentation 11 Virtual Schools and Colleges in Europe: Looking for Success Factors.

VISCED
A Transnational Appraisal of Virtual School and College Provision

Virtual Schools and Colleges in Europe: Looking for Success Factors

Ilse Op de Beeck, KU Leuven

EDEN Research Workshop, 23 October 2012, Leuven, Belgium

VISCED project

Virtual School and College Education for Teenagers and Young Adults

- Project duration: 1 January 2011 - 31 December 2012
- Funding by European Commission through Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP)

VISCED partners

Virtual schools & colleges: why?

- Students who are long-term sick and/or hospitalised
- Students with disabilities
- Young parents or pregnant young women
- Travellers
- Students who have been bullied or are school-phobic
- Students with behavioural problems
- Students who left school with no or few qualifications
- Students who are imprisoned
- Geographically isolated students
- Students with specific language needs (immigrants with poor host-nation language skills)
- Expatriates - often the children of diplomats or executives in multi-national companies
- Elite performers - e.g. athletes, sportsmen, child entertainers

VISCED project aim

- Make an **inventory** and carry out a transnational **appraisal**
- Innovative ICT-enhanced learning/teaching **exemplar initiatives**
- E-mature major **secondary and post-secondary education** providers (including Virtual Schools and Colleges)
- **14-21** aged students
- Europe & the world

Project wiki:

www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.eu

Virtual schools & colleges in Europe: some figures

- Currently 70 initiatives identified in Europe, in 18 different countries
- 30 to 50% initially established addressing issues of pupil inclusion
- 50/50 private/public providers
- Typical size: around 450-500 students
- 50 % offering full curriculum
- Broad pedagogical spectrum: from 100% online through to significant face-to-face interaction

Virtual schools & colleges: examples

Bednet

- °2005, Flanders, Belgium
- Public (mix of public-private funding)
- 160 students, aged 6 to 18; 12 staff
- Students suffering from long term and chronic diseases
- Students follow lessons and interact (in real time) with their own class via a Bednet set which consists of two laptops, two webcams, two scanner-printers and a camera focused on the blackboard.

www.bednet.be

Virtual schools & colleges: examples

Interhigh

- ° 2005, Wales
- Private school, not-for-profit company
- > 200 students aged 11-18; > 20 teachers & staff
- Students unable to settle at mainstream schools (UK & abroad)
- Students study online mainly from home and staff do most of their teaching from home (via customised web/videoconferencing software Voxwire).
- Lessons follow the National Curriculum with internal tests to assess progress.

www.interhigh.co.uk

Ensino a Distância para a Itinerância (Escola Móvel)

- ° 2005, Portugal
- Public school, national initiative from the Portuguese Ministry of Education and Science
- 120 students, aged 10-17; 23 teachers & staff
- Students whose families work in circuses and fairs. Recently broadened to also include hospitalised children, teenage mothers and other young people who cannot function in brick-and-mortar schools.
- A school in Lisbon hosts teachers and provides logistics and the organisational infrastructure for the project.
- Students study from home or nearest library/school (Moodle platform, chat for interaction)
- Largely based on the Portuguese national curriculum and following a traditional approach involving subjects, timetables, assignments and grades - but adapted to the needs of the target group.

edi.dgidc.min-edu.pt

Virtual schools & colleges: examples

Sofia Distans

- ° 1994, Stockholm, Sweden
- Public school (mix of public-private funding)
- 500-600 students, aged 12-16; 20 teachers
- Expatriate Swedish students who want to study within the Swedish school system. Now also students not able to attend conventional schools.
- Students in Sweden who study at Sofia must have their studies approved by the local school they attend, which then pays a fee to Sofia to cover the costs of the subjects the student studies via Sofia. On average the students study 50% at their local school and 50% at Sofia.
- The pedagogical approach is to offer blended distance learning (using FirstClass platform, with DVDs and extensive use of internet). Most students are engaged in self-study, following Sofia Distans prepared study plans.
- Student outcomes are similar to physical schools: the school conducts the national tests in Swedish, English and mathematics. The qualifications are recognised in Sweden.

www.sofiadistans.nu

Looking for critical success factors

- Desktop research
  - Relevant literature on success factors for e-learning
  - Quality schemes
  - Benchmarking schemes
  - ….
- Main sources:
  - Re.ViCa critical success factor list: http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Critical_Success_Factors
  - Pick&Mix benchmarking scheme: http://www.matic-media.co.uk/benchmarking/PnM-2pt6-beta3-full.xlsx
  - INACOL national standards: http://www.inacol.org/research/nationalstandards/index.php
- First selection of potential critical success factors
  - Do the success factors meet SMART criteria?
  - Are they applicable to virtual schools?
  - Do the success factors need rewording?
  - Do we find evidence in the case studies?
  - …
- Reflection & discussion in VISCED partnership and International Advisory Committee

Critical success factors

CSF	Description
Usability	All systems (being used to support students, teachers, and others involved) usable, with internal evidence to back this up.
Professional development	Appropriate professional development available to staff (subject matter, pedagogical principles, teaching tools which they are utilising for instruction, as well as in understanding the specific nature of students involved).
Technical infrastructure	The technical infrastructure is reliable and fault tolerant (in terms of availability and backup) and support is readily available to the system users.
Leadership in e-learning	The capability of leaders to make decisions regarding staffing, student issues, and virtual school administration is fully developed at all levels of management.

Critical success factors

CSF	Description
Learning outcomes	All teaching has clearly defined learning outcomes, which are assessed for purposes of certification and progression. Learning outcomes and their assessment are uniform for equivalent units throughout the institution.
Understanding the regulations	Students have a clear understanding of the school/college regulations
Market research	Market research (to assess demand for virtual schooling) done centrally and updated annually or prior to major programme planning.
Relationship management	Effective processes designed to achieve high credibility with relevant government and public agencies

More information?

- Project website: www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info
- Wiki: www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.eu
- Bi-monthly newsletter
- Handbook & brochure coming out soon

or contact: ilse.opdebeeck@kuleuven.be

Presentation 12 Innovative Good Practice in Virtual Schooling in Europe.

sero
catalyst for change

Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme

UC UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha
CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

The (different) news from VISCED:
Innovative Good Practice in Virtual Schooling in Europe

Paul Bacsich
Senior Consultant, Sero
Canterbury Fellow 2012
Project Manager on EU projects VISCED and POERUP

EACEA
Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency

- *Former Research Director, Re.ViCa – virtual campuses (post-secondary)*
- Project Manager, VISCED – Virtual Schools and Colleges (pre-tertiary)
- Benchmarking Consultant, Higher Education Academy, Wales and Sweden
- Project Manager, POERUP – national policies for OER uptake
- Canterbury Visiting Fellow, 2012 (6 week study visit hosted by Prof Niki Davis)
- Other projects: retention, funding, public-private HE consortia, etc

VISCED – Virtual Schools and Colleges for Teenagers and Young Adults

VISCED
A Transnational Appraisal of Virtual School and College Provision

- **Funded under EU LLP KA3 ICT**
- January 2011 to December 2012 inclusive
- Sero is project coordinator and research lead
- Leverages on Re.ViCa, leading into POERUP
- Approximately US$ 500,000 of funding

What is a virtual school? For us…

- An institution that teaches courses entirely or primarily through distance online methods
- With courses which are similar (in purpose and outcome) to those normally taken by school-age children: ISCED 2 and 3
  - lower/upper secondary – junior/senior high
- *Our age focus (in funding terms) is 14-21*
- Making it real: So that's Interhigh – video

World tour on virtual schools

- This audience knows all about US and Canada
- Also in Australia and New Zealand (Te Kura)
- **"Thought" to be few and/or to have died out in Europe – NOT TRUE (70 or more)**
- Also in Latin America
- A few in Africa north and south
- Asia much less clear to us – iNACOL survey helpful
- Less visible in Caribbean and Oceania

Europe

- Europe in our sense includes not only the EU but the countries in geographic Europe including all Russia and Turkey, and Caucasus
- Around 70 virtual schools identified
- Likely to be over 100
- However, most countries have only one or two
- Main exceptions are UK, Spain, Finland and Sweden

Outputs of the project

- Brochure and Wiki
- Handbook – 2 volumes – World Tour
- Newsletter every 2 months
- Case studies – see next slide
- Many reports – final versions soon – including
  - Innovative Good Practice
  - Teacher Training
  - Critical Success Factors
- Lot of additional material in "underwiki"

Three virtual schools to ponder

VISCED
A Transnational Appraisal of Virtual School and College Provision

- Sofia Distans – Sweden (more asynch)
  - http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Sofia_Distans_undervisning - and video
- Interhigh – Wales (more synch) - video
  - http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/InterHigh
- Escola Movel – Portugal - video
  - http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Escola_Movel

Other European Case studies

- Bednet (Belgium)
- iScoil (Ireland)
- Nettilukio – Otava Folk High School (Finland),
- Wereldschool (Netherlands)
- Rīgas Tālmācības Vidusskola (Latvia)
- See http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info/visced-colloquium-for-virtual-schools for more videos

And outside Europe

- Credenda (Canada)
- Open High School, Sydney (Australia)
- Brisbane School of Distance Education (Australia)
- Open Polytechnic (New Zealand) – a virtual college

Key issues – policy constraints

- Some European countries are federal (UK, Germany, Spain)
- Some (UK) even have zero pan-country ministry role (cf Canada)
- "Rights of the Child" issue inhibits homeschooling – thus (?) virtual schooling
- Focus on nation-building/socialisation
- Most ministries not interested: "we thought they had gone"

Key issues 1-4

1. Most activity is blended – ministries thought (or hoped) that there were no virtual schools (any more)
2. Virtual schools are mainly small (few hundred)
3. Much larger focus on expatriates and disadvantaged/ill (homeschooling is often illegal)
4. Virtual schools are less regulated

Key issues 5-9

5. Systems are more "classroom" in focus – not nec. "synchronous"
6. Often can draw on minimal linguistic resources
7. Virtual schools are more entrepreneurial, even state ones
8. Virtual schools for adult credit recovery is a big driver, in some countries (UK, Spain, Nordic)
9. More (?) interpenetration of virtual schools and virtual colleges (UK…)

Innovative practice

- Virtual schools are more conservative – having made the shift to online, they tend to stick with it
- Also the wide nature of the constituency makes them cautious with assumptions on broadband
- Their focus is on effective teaching, not on innovation and research (NB HE)

Staff development – not an issue in Europe

- Staff are recruited with suitable "attitude" and tend to stay a long time
- Systems evolve only slowly
- Virtual schools are not growing fast

Sustainability

- Many virtual schools in Europe are quite old
- Few have failed
- Some of the oldest operators are flagging since they find it hard to shift from print/correspondence to online

EU policy areas where virtual schools could help

Virtual schools are key to various EU initiatives:

- STEM and other shortage subjects
- Early school leaving
- Travelling and other excluded communities
- Broadband uptake and open education

But issues with:

- No EU right to acceptable level and choice of education EU-wide
- No *Bologna for schools* credit transfer

Recommendations – for school-age children

- Virtual schools have been shown to be effective and no more costly than f2f schools
- Yet in most EU countries virtual schools are rare
  - Most common in countries with lighter regulation
- So... Governments should ensure that their regulations for schools do not explicitly or implicitly discriminate against virtual schools
  - In particular, consider their restrictive approach to "home education" (e.g. Germany, Netherlands, ...)
  - Virtual schools are NOT home education, they are schools (just as open universities are universities)

Virtual schools for adults

- Many virtual schools in US and some in Europe also cater for adults (e.g. UK, Finland)
- This is so that adults can get school-leaving qualifications to make them suitable to enter professions or study at university
- In the UK there are around 10 providers of online "GCSE" (school leaving) and "A levels" (uni entrance), mainly but not wholly for 21+

Cost-effectiveness

- A study for Sero by George Watley of University of Northampton claims, that for England:
  - "people earning a [university entrance] qualification exclusively through distance learning could do so at a cost between 9 and 38 percent of school-based learning, a potential saving of 62 to 91 percent in comparison to current funding given to traditional schools!"
- This caused substantial discussion at the European Virtual Schools Colloquium in Sheffield!
- Some backing for the general thrust of these figures from other countries (US, Scotland, India, etc)

Recommendations for virtual schooling for adults

- Governments should reverse their neglect of non-university education for adults and in particular foster the development of *adult-focused* online teaching of school-leaving qualifications
- Universities and their researchers should consider long and hard why virtual schools in EU have been set up easily and cheaply in techno-pedagogic terms, yet universities in EU mostly struggle to deliver substantial distance learning and insist on doing large numbers of pilots and studies before making choices

Implications of this for universities and governments

- The various "fudges" to allow older adults to enter university without adequate qualifications could then be swept away
- All students could then enter university with relevant and up to date school-leaving qualifications
- Drop-out would be reduced, thus retention improved
- Quality of graduates would increase (e.g higher skill for "critical thinking") – NB Academically Adrift
- Perhaps in some countries overall course length at university could then be reduced?

Conclusions as slogans

- "Return to study" gives you a tradeable qualification for the first time
- *Virtual college first, then to virtual university*
- Many other advantages, but "system costs" and "non-statal providers" can be controversial

That's all folks!

Paul Bacsich
Sero

newsletter
http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info/

wiki
http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/VISCED

Presentation 13 The use of media in virtual schooling – findings from the VISCED project.

VISCED

A Transnational Appraisal of Virtual School and College Provision

The use of media in virtual schooling – findings from the VISCED project

Giles Pepler, Sero Consulting – UK

giles@sero.co.uk

VISCED project aims and scope

- "To make an inventory and carry out a systematic review of international and national levels of innovative ICT-enhanced learning/teaching exemplar initiatives and 'e-mature' major secondary and post-secondary education providers for the 14-21 age group (including Virtual Schools and Colleges)"
- Identify and pilot innovative good practice in ICT-enhanced learning
- Identify critical success factors for European virtual schools and colleges
- Make recommendations on teacher training for virtual schooling
- Make policy recommendations for virtual schooling to national education ministries and EU policy makers

VISCED case studies and pilots

We describe eight case studies of European virtual schools and four from outside Europe. We facilitated four pilot studies in England, Greece and Sweden.

This presentation uses material from seven European case studies:

- **Ensino a Distância para a Itinerância [Portugal]**
- **InterHigh [Wales]**
- **iScoil [Ireland]**
- **Nettilukio – Otava Folk High School [Finland]**
- **Rīgas Tālmācibas Vidusskola [Latvia]**
- **Sofia Distans [Sweden]**
- **Wereldschool [Netherlands]**

and one of our four pilot studies:

- **Notre Dame High School, Sheffield [England]**

Case study schools: use of media for teaching

	Very often	Fairly often	From time to time	Rarely	Never
Visual material	ED IH IS OT RI	SO	WE		
Printed material	RI WE	SO	IH	ED IS OT	
Images	IH IS OT WE	ED RI SO			
Diagrams and charts	IH IS	ED OT RI SO	WE		
Film & video	IH IS RI	OT SO	ED WE		
Podcasts		SO	ED IS OT	IH	RI WE
Webcasts	OT	SO	ED IS	IH	RI WE
Other digital material	ED OT	RI WE			

What the schools say about the most effective media for teaching

- **Visual material:** *"always good for interaction & participation, very flexible and can be used in conjunction with other classroom tools" – "engaging for our young cohort to use student interest led based visual material and facilitates students with weaker literacy skills" – "video webcasts allow the student to see, hear and 'feel' the content when they like"*
- **Printed material and e-books:** *"our e-books contain teacher examples and explanations about the most important information in each study module" – "printed material can be read at any time in any place without the use of a device"*
- **Skype:** *" when students have seen the video of a specific module, or tried to find unclear chapters in a book, it is possible to have a private lesson with the teacher via Skype and get immediate feedback".*

Case study schools: use of media for communication

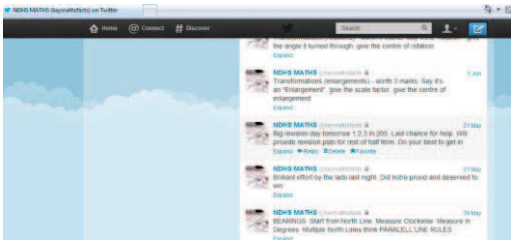
	Staff/staff communications					Staff/student communications				
Frequency	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Email	IH OT RI SO WE	ED IS				IH OT RI SO WE			**ED**	**IS**
Skype	OT		ED	**RI SO WE**	**IH IS**	RI	OT	ED WE	**SO**	**IH IS**
Adobe Connect	**OT**				ED IH IS RI SO WE	**OT**		**ED**		IH IS RI SO WE
Flash	**RI**				ED IH IS OT SO WE			**RI**		ED IH IS OT SO WE
Other [mostly various chat forums]	IH IS OT RI	ED IH	IS OT	SO		ED IH IS RI SO	IH OT	IS		

Case study schools: social media

	Staff/staff communications					Staff/student communications				
Frequency	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Facebook	RI	IH OT		ED	IS SO WE	RI	OT			ED IH IS SO WE
Twitter		IH	OT	ED RI	IS SO WE	RI		OT		ED IH IS SO WE
YouTube		IH	IS OT		ED RI SO WE	RI		ED IS OT SO WE		
Other [e.g. Local 'Facebook'	OT RI	IH						ED		OT

Using Twitter for revision – Notre Dame High School

Twitter for revision in action at Notre Dame High School



Case study schools: future plans for use of media

Key aims are:

- **Increasing interactivity**
- **Increasing personalisation**

through

- Skype group calls
- Developing uses of the learning platform
- Animation & presentation software
- Looking for alternative conferencing software
- For some, increasing use of Twitter and social media

Links and more information

- Project website: www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info
- Wiki: www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.eu
- Bi-monthly newsletter
- Project Handbook (Volume 1) and Project Brochure (an 8-page summary) available on Thursday at the VISCED stand

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Presentation 14 Virtual Schools as Innovative ICT-Enhanced Learning/Teaching Exemplar Initiatives: What Makes Things Work?

VISCED
A Transnational Appraisal of Virtual School and College Provision

Virtual Schools as Innovative ICT-Enhanced Learning/Teaching Exemplar Initiatives: What Makes Things Work?

Nikos Zygouritsas
Director, Lambrakis Foundation

VISCED project aim

- Make an **inventory** and carry out a transnational **appraisal**
- Innovative ICT-enhanced learning/teaching **exemplar initiatives**
- E-mature major **secondary and post-secondary education** providers (including Virtual Schools and Colleges)
- **14-21** aged students

VISCED partners

virtual school?

- An institution that teaches courses entirely or primarily through distance online methods
- With courses which are similar (in purpose and outcome) to those normally taken by school-age children: ISCED 2 and 3
  - lower/upper secondary – junior/senior high
- *Our age focus (in funding terms) is 14-21*

World tour of virtual schools

- Virtual schools - and virtual schooling - exist in profusion in US (500?) and Canada (50?)
- Also in Australia and New Zealand (Te Kura)
- **"Thought" to be few and/or to have died out in Europe – NOT TRUE (70 or more)**
- Also in Latin America; but less visible in Caribbean and Oceania
- Very few in Africa (north and south only)
- Asia much less clear to us – some now emerging

Virtual schools & colleges in Europe: some figures

- Currently 70 initiatives identified in Europe, in 18 different countries
- 30 to 50% initially established addressing issues of pupil inclusion
- 50/50 private/public providers
- Typical size: around 450-500 students
- 50 % offering full curriculum
- Broad pedagogical spectrum: from 100% online through to significant face-to-face interaction

Virtual schools & colleges: why?

- long-term sick and/or hospitalised
- with disabilities
- Young parents or pregnant young women
- Travellers
- bullied or school-phobic
- behavioural problems
- Students who left school with no or few qualifications
- imprisoned
- Geographically isolated
- specific language needs
- Expatriates
- "Elite" performers

Virtual schools & colleges: examples

Bednet

- 2005, Flanders, Belgium
- Public (mix of public-private funding)
- 160 students, aged 6 to 18; 12 staff
- Students suffering from long term and chronic diseases
- Students follow lessons and interact (in real time) with their own class via a Bednet set which consists of two laptops, two webcams, two scanner-printers and a camera focused on the blackboard.

www.bednet.be

Virtual schools & colleges: examples

Interhigh

- 2005, Wales
- Private school, not-for-profit company
- > 200 students aged 11-18; > 20 teachers & staff
- Students unable to settle at mainstream schools (UK & abroad)
- Students study online mainly from home and staff do most of their teaching from home (via customised web/videoconferencing software Voxwire).
- Lessons follow the National Curriculum with internal tests to assess progress.

www.interhigh.co.uk

Ensino a Distância para a Itinerância (Escola Móvel)

- 2005, Portugal
- Public school, national initiative from the Portuguese Ministry of Education and Science
- 120 students, aged 10-17; 23 teachers & staff
- Students whose families work in circuses and fairs. Recently broadened to also include hospitalised children, teenage mothers and other young people who cannot function in brick-and-mortar schools.
- A school in Lisbon hosts teachers and provides logistics and the organisational infrastructure for the project.
- Students study from home or nearest library/school (Moodle platform, chat for interaction)
- Largely based on the Portuguese national curriculum and following a traditional approach involving subjects, timetables, assignments and grades - but adapted to the needs of the target group.

edi.dgidc.min-edu.pt

Virtual schools & colleges: examples

Sofia Distans

- 1994, Stockholm, Sweden
- Public school (mix of public-private funding)
- 500-600 students, aged 12-16; 20 teachers
- Expatriate Swedish students who want to study within the Swedish school system. Now also students not able to attend conventional schools.
- Students in Sweden who study at Sofia must have their studies approved by the local school they attend, which then pays a fee to Sofia to cover the costs of the subjects the student studies via Sofia. On average the students study 50% at their local school and 50% at Sofia.
- The pedagogical approach is to offer blended distance learning (using FirstClass platform, with DVDs and extensive use of internet). Most students are engaged in self-study, following Sofia Distans prepared study plans.
- Student outcomes are similar to physical schools: the school conducts the national tests in Swedish, English and mathematics. The qualifications are recognised in Sweden.

www.sofiadistans.nu

Looking for critical success factors

- Desktop research
- Main sources:
  - Re.ViCa critical success factor list
  - Pick&Mix benchmarking scheme
  - INACOL national standards
- First selection of potential critical success factors
- Reflection & discussion in VISCED partnership and International Advisory Committee

critical success factors 1

- **Leadership in e-learning**

The capability of leaders to make decisions regarding staffing, student issues, and virtual school administration is fully developed at all levels of management.

- **Market research**

Market research (to assess demand for virtual schooling) done centrally and updated annually or prior to major programme planning.

critical success factors 2

- **Relationship management**

Effective processes designed to achieve high credibility with relevant government and public agencies.

- **Technical infrastructure**

The technical infrastructure is reliable and fault tolerant (in terms of availability and backup) and support is readily available to the system users.

critical success factors 3

- **Usability**

All systems (for supporting students, teachers, and others involved) usable, with internal evidence to back this up. Whatever the system, the extent to which it is user-friendly and fit for purpose is a key consideration.

- **Professional development**

Appropriate professional development available to staff (subject matter, pedagogical principles, teaching tools which they are utilising for instruction, as well as in understanding the specific nature of students involved).

critical success factors 4

- **Learning outcomes**

All teaching has clearly defined learning outcomes, which are assessed for purposes of certification and progression. Learning outcomes and their assessment are uniform for equivalent units throughout the institution.

- **Understanding the regulations**

Students have a clear understanding of the school/college regulations.

More information?

- Project website: www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info
- Wiki: www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.eu
- Handbook (volume 1 available online – volume 2 coming out soon) & brochure

or contact: zygouritsas@lrf.gr

Webinar