

RESULTS OF THE PROJECT (POLAND)

The discussion of preliminary research results made it possible for us to share information on common issues as well as barriers and key differences regarding the use of ICT in partner countries. They demonstrated how diverse ICT implementation is in different countries.

We wanted to investigate the students' and teachers' ICT awareness and their preparation in using it for learning/studying. Furthermore, we wanted to gauge their attitudes towards ICT in their schools and universities. The project provided us an opportunity to directly affect the national strategy and to familiarize ourselves with existing schools in our region.

We finished our survey of secondary school and higher education students' views on the academic use of computers and the Internet in selected institutions from the Lower Silesia region in May 2005. The questionnaires were distributed at the Lower Silesia Educational Open Market (TARED) in March to selected groups of students during their regular classes. The questionnaires were also available at the IISCE website.

During our research, we could not find any articles or books regarding the use of online, open, or blended learning in Lower Silesian schools. There was no literature in the Polish language that described or introduced the ICT tools. We designed our own questionnaire for students and teachers based on the sample prepared by our Dutch partner, with modifications so that the survey would fit the Polish cultural context. We used questions to collect information about the context within which the schools and universities are preparing to implement ICT as well as the attitudes of the teaching and support staff toward ICT.

The project was designed as a preliminary step to further action. To this end, we selected three secondary schools out of more than 200 and three schools of higher education out of 35 to participate in the survey. We did not send the questionnaires to personal or school e-mail addresses as the databases of most Polish schools and universities do not yet have such lists or allow bulk e-mails to be sent to students. We also did not predict difficulties with online feedback.

Our questionnaires were mostly paper-based with a very small number of on-line forms filled. We collected the views of 20 teachers and 347 students asking them about their ownership of PCs, their ICT skills, where and how often they used ICT for their studies and work, and their confidence and attitude towards ICT. We interviewed 16 people responsible for introducing and implementing modern technologies at schools and institutions of higher education. To help us in the interpretation of data, we also collected broader information about the region of Lower Silesia, where ICT implementation is less developed. There are very few educational institutions, schools and universities that have recently started to test some ICT solutions. There is still a paucity of up-to-date information about ICT and few workshops for teachers and school administration staff that are focused on open free sources such as MOODLE.

We plan our survey to be an initial step toward a broader open-ended survey of students at different types of higher and secondary education institutions.

We hope that the result of our research will be used by individual institutions to enhance their knowledge about their own practices and that in the future it may help them apply for funds for new projects. It may also motivate them to pursue further research on establishing a web platform to communicate and transfer knowledge and experience between vocational institutions in the region.

The project results were presented in November at a final conference in Wrocław.

THE FINAL CONFERENCE

The final conference was held in Wrocław on November 17-19, 2005. The conference was of interest and importance to those practitioners in the field of vocational education who were interested in ICT and e-learning and in "best practices" in knowledge transfer.

Though representing very diverse institutions and coming from different European regions and nations, each participant benefited from the network and the assembled knowledge and experiences.

We hope that the project, coordinated by the office of the regional government (Urząd Marszałkowski), will produce results with the potential for wider dissemination and application.

More information about the project is available at:

<http://www.iisce.dswe.wroc.pl/hanse-passa.htm>

and at its official website:

<http://media.zmml.uni-bremen.de/hansenet>

ENCOUNTERS WITH HUMAN RIGHTS

From November 2004 through July 2005, a series of workshops entitled "Encounters with Human Rights" took place at the International Institute for the Study of Culture and Education of University of Lower Silesia in Wrocław. The four-hour classes met twice a month. The course was mainly designed for ULS AAE students; however, students from other institutions were welcome as well. Students with disabilities were particularly encouraged to attend. The objective of the workshops was to introduce students to the concept and history of human rights, human-rights education, human rights in the context of people with disabilities, the Council of Europe (mission, activity, history, etc.), human-rights legislation, and non-governmental organizations.

The workshops are the centerpiece of the international Project Chance, conducted within the framework of the Council of Europe's educational program. The project will conclude with international training conducted by well-known specialists in education and human rights.

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