

Swiss and EU Universities Facing the Issue of eLearning Quality. A qualitative and quantitative research

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Field tests and sustainability of SVC projects
Bern, Swiss National Science Foundation
3-4 December 2002

The research

All the 52 Universities in Switzerland and in the EU regions "Four Motors for Europe" were asked to fill-in a questionnaire assessing the quality of their eLearning activities along 24 parameters.



eLearning quality in European Universities

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Social Environment

- eLearning is to be effective and also efficient
- The question “*Should we use eLearning?*” is being replaced by the question: “*How do we offer a high quality eLearning experience?*”
- Our research stresses this issue.

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The “Quality on the Line” Study

- The Institute for Higher Education Policy has realised the research “*Quality on the Line. Benchmarks for Success in Internet-based Distance Education*” (2000).
 - Phase 1: review of the literature
 - Phase 2: selection of six institutions
 - Phase 3: interviews and questionnaires
- Output: 24 Benchmarks
 - C1. Institutional Support; C2. Course Development; C3. Teaching/Learning; C4. Course Structure; C5. Student Support; C6. Faculty Support; C7. Evaluation and Assessment

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Research Method /1

- Sample: 52 Universities within 5 Areas
 - Baden-Württemberg: 9 Universities
 - Catalunya: 11 Universities
 - Lombardia: 12 Universities
 - Rhône-Alpes: 8 Universities
 - Switzerland: 12 Universities

	Main city	Area sq km	Population	Working pop.	Gross enrolment ratios at the tertiary level of education (1996)	N. of Universities [1]
Baden-Württemberg	Stuttgart	35.752	10.408.370	4.970.000	47.00%	9
Catalunya	Barcelona	31.895	6.120.000	2.691.000	51.00%	11
Lombardia	Milano	23.860	9.065.440	4.020.260	47.00%	12
Rhône-Alpes	Lyon	43.700	5.648.800	2.159.596	51.00%	8
Switzerland	Bern	41.293	7.204.000	3.159.000	33.00%	12

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Research Method /2

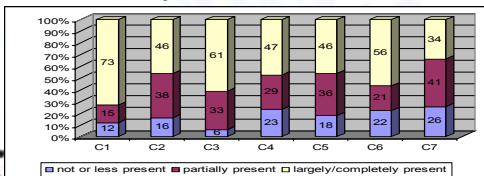
- Tool: Questionnaire
 - Part A: general information
 - Part B: quality benchmarks (Likert scale)

1	2	3	4	5	
≠	≠	≠	≠	≠	≠
completely absent	largely absent	partially absent/present	largely present	completely present	I do not know

- Questionnaires were sent to persons with high responsibility and best informed on eLearning
- Very good response *ratio* (30 out of 52: 58%): descriptive research

Results /1

- Benchmarking



- C1 Institutional Support (73%),
- C3 Teaching/Learning Process (61%),
- C6 Faculty Support (56%),
- C4 Course Structure (47%),
- C2 Course Development (46%),
- C5 Student Support (46%),
- C7 Evaluation and Assessment (34%)

Results /2

- Correlation with higher benchmarks:
 - online degree programs
 - activities integrated in curricula
 - faculty members independently organised
- No correlation with higher benchmarks:
 - big number of student
- Goals of eLearning activities:

to improve the education quality	33%
to increase accessibility and flexibility of curricula	26%
to offer technology experience to learners	15%
to answer the technology trend arising in the Higher Education sector	12%
to improve the efficiency of investments	6%
to reduce costs	3%
Other	5%
