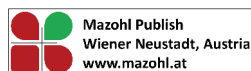




**Blended Learning Quality – Concepts
Optimized for Adult Education**



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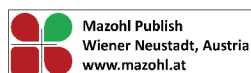
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A guidance to Blended Learning

Abstract

Blended Learning is a relatively new teaching method, which emerged in the last 8 years. Developed as a combination of classroom teaching and distance learning, this method takes up an important role in the educational system. Big companies were the first to use this teaching and training concept because they expected cost reductions. Nowadays the first research work about the efficiency and the necessary environment of Blended Learning are published. One of the issues mentioned is a missing quality concept for Blended Learning.

There exists the ISO/IEC 19796 norm (designed for distance learning) that could be more or less applicable for Blended Learning as well. As quality is beginning to play an increasingly important role in the educational system, the consortium extended the mentioned norms with a special focus on learners' needs. Additionally, the consortium analysed and transferred the results of the research work dealing with Blended Learning into a quality framework for Blended Learning. The project focuses especially on the concepts of the quality of courses, the courses itself, the quality in organizations responsible for Blended Learning courses and activities, and last but not least on the needs and the environmental conditions of the learners. The result is a scientific bases – more or less theoretical – description of a practicable quality framework for Blended Learning, added by a course to teach the developed results. The consortium tested the course in a pilot environment (at the University of Helsinki). An equivalent course was held with ten participants as a first trial in Wiener Neustadt by the EBI. Additionally there was a compact eLearning course, based on a Moodle environment, developed.

The consortium's members are all involved in education or further education of adults and experienced in organizing courses for adults.

The result of the project is a well proofed practicable quality concept (in written form) covering all issues of Blended Learning with a special focus respecting the needs and the learning environment of learners as well. The quality concepts are developed for Adult Education in the frame of a Grundtvig Multilateral Project 539717-LLP-1-2013-1-IT-GRUNDTVIG-GMP. The versatile results of this project are also valid for Higher Education and in the VET sector too. The project results can easily be transferred to equivalent teaching environments in these other sectors of education.

Chapter Overview

Chapter 1

“Our Understanding of Blended Learning” deals with the status of research in the frame of quality assurance in Blended Learning. Here the focus was laid on papers, documents and books describing the needs of learners.

Chapter 2

This chapter about “Quality Assurance in Blended Learning – a Quality Framework” summarises the findings of the consortium and presents a practicable quality framework with a special focus on the learners’ needs

Chapter 3

The chapter about “Quality Criteria for the institution” gives an overview of quality criteria that should be used by the teaching institution before, during and after a Blended Learning course.

Chapter 4

In the chapter the “Enrolment in a Blended Learning course” is described from the point of view of a learner – what do learners expect, what do they need and how can a teaching organisation care for the necessary quality level?

Chapter 5

“The Course itself” is a big chapter including the results of the surveys performed during the project. These results give an overview about the technical issues of the eLearning Platform used in a Blended Learning course as well as the necessary tutorial support for the learners.

Chapter 6

“The Assessment” describes the normally final activity in the Blended Learning course and summarizes the expected quality assurance.

Chapter 7

In the chapter “The Pilot Course” - performed by the University of Helsinki - is described and the feedback of the participants is presented.