

ICT-based teaching at the University of Haute Alsace

In France, education and research development projects in universities are defined through programmes established both by the universities and the French Ministry of Education, Research and Technology. These contracts are defined for a 4 years period.

In the 2001/2004 contract signed in December 2001, the UHA (University of Haute Alsace) intends to optimise its technical potential in order to set up an ICT development policy. This policy will be coordinated by a committee in charge of referring and evaluating projects incorporating new pedagogical applications. This committee will collaborate with a think-tank structure created to help all members of staff and particularly teachers involved in ICT projects. The aim of this structure is to help staff to pool resources and to provide information to facilitate access to national and international networks.

The first step, last year, was to give information about ICT possibilities -an inquiry has been made asking all teachers if they have already used ICT in their courses and if they still use it.

Furthermore, to help teachers to follow through their projects, the university together with the UCE department has begun to organise different courses: from using the Web and e-mails, to how to design Web-based computer programmes. The next seminar organised on this subject will be held on January 31st with a neighbouring university to discuss: "New ways of learning".

The UHA has defined five axes of its ICT development policy:

- The enrichment of traditional courses with multimedia tools: local experimentation in various university departments in initial and also continuing education which must be encouraged and extended.
- The second axis of our ICT policy is the development of self-access training through the transformation of the university self-training language centre, called CLAM, into a multidisciplinary training centre with the development of tutoring. The first new course proposed to all students locally or at a distance is the first two years of the science

graduate programme. This programme, developed by a number of French universities, is proposed to other university members of the RUCA (network of academic training centres).

- The third axis is the development of distance learning: the UHA is now involved in four national e-network projects. These consortiums called "campus numériques": "e-campus " were launched by the French Ministry through calls for proposals in 2000 and 2001. The selected projects in which UHA is involved with other universities, are:
 - Hermes -an e-learning project comprising courses for all the university technical institutes specialising in economy and management.
 - A project for the " multidisciplinary graduate programme" of Web-based courses in biology, geology, physics and technology to prepare the competitive entry examination for primary school teachers.
 - "RESEAUX.DOC -a project to design an information search training network
 - PEGASUS -an interesting project for continuing education whose aim is to set up a web-based learning programme with tutoring for professionals and job seekers who want to prepare the access diploma for university entrance. Our university is responsible for the development of the German and Mathematics courses.

- Another axis is to develop collaborative training. This is still in its experimental phase in Colmar (one of the two UHA sites). This site uses a learning platform (Learning Space) and has developed collaborative training tasks.

- The fifth axis is the setting up of a technical structure, with all the necessary materials and documentation to design ICT projects, accessible to every person involved in the development of new learning environments. This laboratory will be able to produce web-based teaching/learning resources.

I should also mention another important point :

- the restructuring of the University Website improving access to information concerning courses and services offered by the UHA,
- the construction of an information gateway which will give access to all resources through a global information system.

SWOT analyses can be summarised as follows:

➤ **Strengths**

- The strong will of our university as confirmed in its development contract to enlarge ICT learning,
- Belonging to e-campus is very important for the future development of ICT both within our university and by linking it to other universities,
- A system of contact people in faculties -active mailing-lists.

➤ **Weaknesses**

- teachers are not yet in a position to develop virtual learning courses (lack of time, knowledge's, finances),
- need for methodological competence in preparing ICT-based courses,
- limited funding for ICT-based teaching activities,
- the setting up of a coordinated ICT-based system of courses in collaboration with the think-tank structure, the production laboratory, the training centre and tutors is still at the project stage.

➤ **Threats**

- As we are a small university, we cannot invest much funding and personnel in the projects,
- the use of ICT introduces a new form of competitiveness between universities, and in particular between universities and the private sector in the education market place.

➤ **Opportunities**

- improving knowledge and possibilities to use the internet,
- developing another way of working (interdisciplinary teams)

Example of good practice

Proposing courses, seminars and offering methodological and technological support for teachers.

Areas that require developing

- We don't know if the national policy of support for ICT will continue even though this help is essential to initiate new projects.
- As web-based courses are developed, it will be necessary to organise a system of tutors in relation with teachers.

