

Workshop A Summary – Basic education in rural areas, focusing on digitalisation

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“When iPads become Swiss army knives”

1. Elisabeth Bergander, Bærum Adult Education Centre, Norway

Digital media in language teaching in Norway

1. Framework conditions
2. Why do we need digital media in basic education

1. Certain basic conditions are prerequisite for the use of digital media in basic education.

Everyone in the school has access to the internet with two WiFi networks available. One network is used by mobile devices (iPads in particular), the other is used by the desktop computers. The classrooms are equipped with Smartboards.

There are two ‘IT teachers’ who explain the IT facilities to the other members of staff and act as the main point of contact for all IT issues. Their teaching hours (actual time in class) are reduced pro rata (approx. 10%) to give them time for this task.

The technology is designed to be very user friendly, for example, it only takes ‘a click of a button’ to switch between the iPads and PCs.

There is also a media department where teachers can buy additional apps as needed or suggested.

Since 2013, testing for Norwegian as a foreign language has been carried out digitally – IT skills are therefore a key competence to be included in the teaching plan.

It will take some time until this infrastructure is fully established by municipal authorities and all framework conditions have been reconciled with one another.

2. Digital media increases student’s motivation and facilitates improved documentation of learning progress.

The increased relevance to a student’s own realm of experience increases their motivation to learn. Participants thus not ‘only’ learn reading and writing skills, but also simultaneously learn to use digital media, which is often a requirement for many different jobs.

In addition to this, digital media also offer improved documentation opportunities as learning progress is much more visible. Participants receive automatic feedback as they use various different apps. This allows individual adjustments to be made, which makes it much easier to work with widely heterogeneous groups.

Participants require less time to learn individual letters when they learn using writing skills apps. Apps provide both visual and acoustic support for learning.

Furthermore, digital media are also a positive factor for the economy and the environment as apps and ebooks cost less than printed editions of workbooks whilst also reducing paper consumption.

Conclusion:

Factors for success

- Basic parameters must be met (media development plan, resources, time and personnel, feedback)
- Technological optimism
- Trust in individual responsibility
- Appreciation
- Learning is fun

2. Regina Eichen, German Association of Adult Education Centres (DVV), Bonn

Basic education online with the DVV education portal ich-will-lernen.de – experiences gained and outlook for the future

The ich-will-lernen.de portal for online learning is primarily aimed at learners for whom participation in traditional classroom-based courses is problematic, e.g. because this is associated with a high degree of schedule flexibility or spatial mobility.

This tool helps us reach out to people with basic education deficits who live in rural areas. Online programmes such as ich-will-lernen.de should be seen as a means to close the gaps in education. Nevertheless, they are also very well-suited for use as a blended learning tool, both for preparatory or follow-up work combined with a classroom-based course or for adding greater detail to learning content.

ich-will-lernen.de focuses on three main areas: literacy skills, school-leaving qualifications and managing life and money. There are currently over 800 students and 300 tutors actively using the portal.

At the moment, the portal is undergoing a further development process, which is due to be completed in 2018. The existing learning areas are to be supplemented with new features and content such as dictionaries and third party content, whilst user friendliness will also be improved.