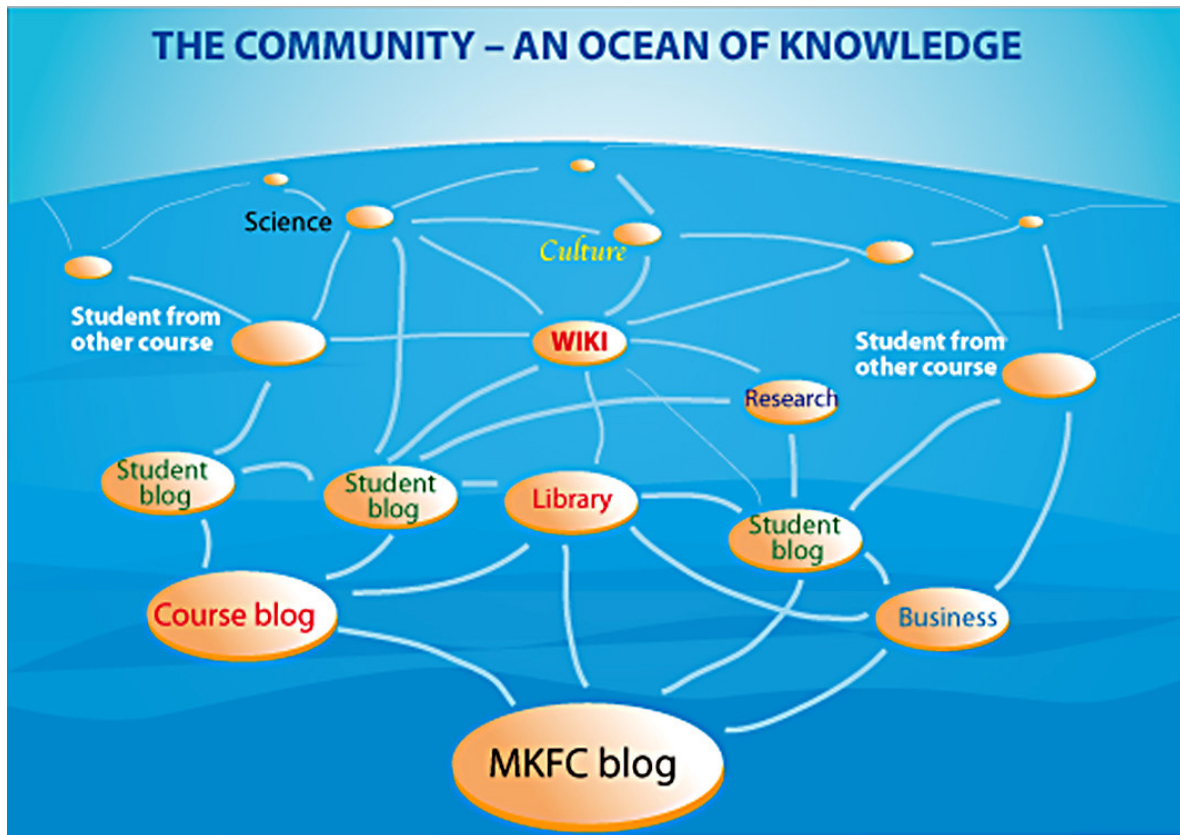


MKFC Stockholm Folk High School; E-learning – in practice with quality



MKFC Stockholm Folk High School
<http://www.mkfc.se>

MKFC Stockholm College
<http://www.stockholmcollege.se/>

Kalle Hedlund
kalle@mkfc.se
kalle.hedlund@folkhogskola.se

Background

MKFC (Multi Cultural Folk High School) MKFC Stockholm College is one of the families within Swedish Popular Adult Education. The nature of Popular Adult Education is to work with bottom up principles in the Swedish educational system. This is financed with government grant. Education is delivered from primary up to University level. This kind of systematic approach combined with freedom from central rules makes it possible for the “owner organizations”, as MKFC, to work and start with any challenges we want to. The only limitations are the ones from the owners and learners.

MKFC is both Sweden’s largest folk high school and one of the newest. We work with e-learning in order to provide courses for students all over Sweden and on global scale as well. Many of our students study abroad in our e-learning platform “EduLink” which provides necessary tools for learning, like discussion forums, questionnaires, portfolio, learning diary, assignments, Skype- internet telephone, digital libraries in addition to materials. The use of Learning Management system (LMS) in the global context has given us a unique knowledge on how to create, maintain and update courses down to users’ specific needs.

In the beginning MKFC was devoted to design education to the excluded, the immigrants and the unemployed, in order to create social changes together with these groups. One way was in the field of Teacher Training and Education and Health (TVET), to name one area where MKFC has succeeded. In the year of 2001 MKFC moved all courses to our e-learning platform; it then became possible for anyone from all over the country and even from students abroad to participate in our courses.

This way of working has changed MKFC as an organization in more than one way. First of all we don’t have any students at our school. And when the students don’t have to travel, they have more time to focus on their own learning process. Instead of meeting in the school they meet each other when suitable on the internet in our “classroom” EduLink. The teachers don’t have to start a lesson on a specific time. This creates a flexible working climate for both students and employees and gives basic condition for a good life balance.

What is e-learning for us?

This is how we look upon e-learning:

- The relationship with internationalisation of education is needed
- is an effective means to improve access to learning opportunities
- is supporting innovation processes
- help to achieve better employability
- impact on the internationalisation
- contributing to personal development in a Lifelong Learning perspective
- a facilitator of organisational change in e-learning users organisations, such as companies, public administration, educational institutions

E-learning is training and education provided by computers and/or mobile devices (like laptop computers or smart mobile phones) either on- or off-line. We also believe that the students’ learning process have to be guided with pedagogical methods in order to make it successful. Web based training, like web-courses creates a structure for learning process, it provide learning materials and facilitate learning with learning tasks. In addition, e-learning

enables students' own knowledge construction and competence development process in interaction with tutors, mentors, peers and with the whole learning community. E-learning is highly efficient and accessible way to promote learning processes and the development of competences without constraints of place and time.

Before the year 2000 courses were in the classroom but we noticed that e-learning practices gave more benefits. MKFC successfully offers courses from ground level to university courses for the needs of immigrants and Swedes. MKFC offered traditional teacher training from the start, and later teacher training for e-learning needs.

When web-based on-line courses became possible, MKFC was the first institution in Sweden and in the whole northern Europe, to change the paradigm from face to face education to e-learning on the net (1997 -2001). The paradigm shift was implemented and completed by the year 2001. Today all the courses are available for the students on the internet 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The RoadMap of e-Learning

This is how we look upon how e-learning contributes to increasing access to learning, improving employability and citizenship and develops societies.

E-learning contributing to achieve the following set of priorities:

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Access to learning; 2. Collaborative knowledge construction in learning communities; 3. Employability; 4. Personal development and citizenship; 5. Internationalization of Education and Training; 6. Organizational change; 7. Innovation of Education and Training systems |
|---|

Proceeding in making The 'RoadMap of e-Learning:

<p>Actors asks: "What values are leading our views?" (<i>Values statement</i>), "What are our objectives?" (<i>Mission statement</i>) "Where do we fit in this context?" (<i>Vision or strategy statement</i>). Studies operates creating a structural and cultural paradigm with the needs of a empowering the society.</p>
--

Obstacles in the roadmap	Opportunities in the roadmap
<p>The main obstacles for the development of e-learning are gaps in teachers training. Other problems are the conservatism in the traditional education and educational institutions. MKFC have experienced that learners of any kind - old, women, man, children, immigrants - don't have difficulties</p>	<p>Providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The latest generation of e-Learning packages includes mentoring, tutoring services, the possibility of interaction learner – learner and learner-teacher, simulations of working environment • The virtual platform Community,

<p>to accept and use e-learning.</p> <p>The decisions makers very often mistake the impact the e-learning method, because they only "know" how the old traditional educational system and practices work.</p>	<p>Blog / wiki, podcasting and other environments for virtual communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulation to stakeholders • Encourage individuals and organizations to position themselves with regard to core issues for the future and develop a predictive capacity and a "transformative" approach. • Collaboration, involvements and commitments in an eLearning sector, working both, in providing information and giving information about education gaps and possibilities • Bottom up production of content
---	---

From classroom to e-learning – teacher training

To make a paradigm shift from the traditional education and training to *the demand and Internet driven learning* needs a lot of teacher training for new pedagogical competences.

All the teachers at MKFC have e-learning teacher training and academic studies. The staff has been educated in “digital pedagogy” by Helsinki University in the year 2000. Personal of MKFC uses 20% of the working time for continuing development of the personals’ competences.

But our e-learning also demands hard work. The factor for success is the employee’s willingness and possibility to learn. The teacher’s role has changed in a rather dramatic way. This hasn’t worked for all, but for the one who has gone thru the transformation from classroom to e-learning, this has lead to a new career and a new education on top on the former teacher profession. This gives MKFC well trained and highly skilled personnel.

E-learning hasn’t been time saving for MKFC, not for our students and not for our teachers. But instead of travels and lesson planning, focus can be shifted to development and quality work. This way of working has also reduced stress for our teachers. In order to make the learning organization successful we work as we educate. The school works similar to the students and collaborates on our intranet. Some employees also work from home and other lives in different cities. This force, in one way, the teacher to collaborate on the internet and it has also made MKFC to a more transparent organization because the communication often occurs in a public forum. Through our methods we have developed a transparent, open e-learning organization. MKFC also employs external consultants as experts for developing courses. For example *Content developers* - who packs, wraps the courses for the digital environment, including videos, audio files, texts, etc., *Programmers* – in order to develop new ideas and features as parts of courses or to transfer existing material/tasks to the new technical and media environment.

Teacher development – project involvement

The fast moving focus from the face-to- face education to the Internet and demand driven e-learning needs a lot of teacher training and piloting of practices. MKFC has been a partner in

several projects in order to learn from others. Experiences from Africa, rural areas in Sweden and EU- projects to use and reuse learning materials from learning platforms to mobile devices with several countries and different kind of actors has learned us a lot. These experiences besides our own R&D are the MKFC platform.

The memberships of networks support development

EDEN, the European Distance and E-Learning Network, established in 1991. Eden is an international educational association open to institutions and individuals dealing with e-learning, open and distance education. Proving versatile expertise, the Association embraces all levels of formal and non-formal education and training. A smart network for the professional community, a professional community for smart learning.

Nowadays net-communities are growing; students, teachers, NGOs, entrepreneurs and experts want to contribute to make information, knowledge and innovations visible in the world.

Quality assurance – is dynamic

MKFC Quality policy with e-learning includes core values of MKFC Education policy and enhancing the quality of e-learning value. The core values need a dynamic assurance approach. e-learning need to give the evidence that changes happened and the future were influenced besides that students got the skills they promised. MKFC uses ISIT-quality system.

Quality work

Through several quality validations each year, we receive information on how the student(s) experience the course(s), the pedagogical approach, the workflow, the amount of workload, the tutoring feedback etc. We also get feedback on the user's experience on the technical dimension, if it's to challenging, to difficult etc. The results indicate at an early stage in what direction we shall develop the courses and on what technical tools we should focus on developing. We also measure the employee's satisfaction ones a term. The employee and the student's results are published on our web page (www.mkfc.se). We strive to be dynamic and the steps from decision to implementation must be short and effective.

The quality assurance show:

- What was the nature of the changes; the relationship between technology and change:
- What stimulated the changes
- Who where the change agents
- How was the process planned
- What model of the changes was adopted
- What was the outcomes of the changes

Quality Development Cycle with e-Learning process

- Decision Phase, strategy with measurable goals, once a year
- Realization Phase, measurement twice every course
- Analyze Phase, twice a year
- Incorporation Phase, continually

MKFC is a member of The European Foundation for Quality in eLearning (EFQUEL) that is a European membership organization. EFQUEL s mission is to enhance the quality of eLearning in Europe by providing services and support for all stakeholders. EFQUEL is built on principles of dialogue and inclusiveness to promote excellence and innovation to achieve Learning Europe. It is an initiative of the Triangle project funded by the European

Commission. The portal provides a unique forum for information, research, networking and debate on innovation and best practice in eLearning quality .

E-learning quality process which contribute for e-learning performances

- Knowledge about quality development for general orientation and selection
- Experience with instruments for quality development and clear strategies with goals
- The courage of modification and innovation to evaluate existing tools after quality measures and to adapt new concepts and create new approaches
- Transparency in order to get more feedback from stakeholders and being public

Pragmatic approach

The nature of quality development is a constant dynamic, modifier process of the offered educational services to the target groups. This is necessary to the dynamic nature of quality in education in general and e-learning in particular. MKFC has included training in quality development for personal and students to make the learning action competent.