

**eLene-EE** is a project of the eLene group (eLearning network) funded by the European Commission eLearning programme and runs from February 2006 to January 2008.

#### THE ELENE-EE CORE PARTNERS ARE:

- ▶ Umeå University (Sweden, coordinator)
- ▶ Canege: Universités Nancy 2, Nice Sophia Antipolis, Paris-Dauphine, Paris-Sud (France)
- ▶ Open University of Catalonia - UOC (Spain)
- ▶ Polish Virtual University (Poland)
- ▶ Politecnico di Milano - METID (Italy)

#### OTHER ASSOCIATED ELENE PARTNERS:

- ▶ University of Bremen (Germany)
- ▶ Finnish Virtual University (Finland)
- ▶ Utrecht University (the Netherlands)

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**economics of  
eLearning conference**  
 12th – 14th December 2007  
 Paris, France

**C**ome to Paris for the eLene partners' first conference devoted to the economics of eLearning!

**D**esigned as a meeting place for decision makers, leading European practitioners and researchers, the conference will enable you to:

#### ■ ■ ▶ **learn from the latest research in**

- ▶ costs and benefits from investments in e-learning,
- ▶ evaluating student performance and ICT,
- ▶ indicators of e-learning,
- ▶ digital divides, digital trajectories and eLearning;

#### ■ ■ ▶ **exchange your ideas and views with peers in special interactive sessions;**

#### ■ ■ ▶ **contribute to the debate by presenting your own research or experience.**

**P**lease see the project website for more information on the conference programme, procedure for submitting papers and registration.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

- How much does it really cost to set up and run a virtual campus?
- What impact does eLearning have on student performance and what are the possible spill-over effects?
- What indicators do we have at our disposal to track the efficiency of e-learning?
- Can e-learning help to bridge the digital divide?

We all know these are important issues that need to be addressed and many Higher Education institutions in Europe are doing so, while others shy away from such a daunting task. eLene-EE proposes to tackle these questions head-on, with a concerted European-wide project to identify, analyse and apply the relevant theory, models and practices in the field.

Our findings have clear policy implications and will help e-learning designers, learners, financiers and decision makers to build up, adapt and improve their initiatives.

The results of the project's activities and of related research in the field will all be presented at the **economics of eLearning conference in Paris, December 12th – 14th 2007.**

## COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF NET-BASED HIGHER EDUCATION

- Is e-learning an efficient use of resources?
- In other words, what are the main benefits and costs for society?

One important aspect of the analysis is to consider effects, or outcomes, for different stakeholders (e.g. students, universities, and policy makers). Although an investment may be beneficial for one stakeholder, it might not be so for another. This raises the question of how costs and benefits should be divided between stakeholders in order to create a correct incentive structure. One case study has already been published, presenting a cost-benefit analysis for a net based nursing programme in Sweden. The nursing programme has a clearly stated regional perspective; i.e. attracting students in the northern inland of Sweden. The case study indicates that the programme is beneficial not only for the student but also for the local society.

## STUDENT PERFORMANCE OF ELEARNING

- Do the uses of ICT affect student performance?
- If so, do the uses of ICT affect student performance differently depending on the subject?

These are two important questions that need attention in order to ensure quality in and efficient training for virtual mobility, including the right choice of tools available from existing technology. The group aims to provide answers to these questions with hypothesis and data from ongoing training as well as data from a carefully designed experimental set-up, collected in Italy, Spain and Sweden.

## INDICATORS OF ELEARNING

- What proportion of higher education institutions' budget is earmarked for eLearning?
- How many students, teachers and other staff are involved in eLearning?

Here we are focusing on the management of eLearning activities in higher education institutions, following an emerging process by collecting data from four different institutions (two French, one Italian and one Polish) over a three-year period to catch the dynamics. The team intends to draw interesting conclusions about the process management, strategy and development models of eLearning activities in higher education institutions. It will also be able to provide comparisons about the development of eLearning in France, Italy and Poland.

## DIGITAL DIVIDES AND ELEARNING

- Why are some institutions, students or countries performing better than others?
- Is there a "productivity paradox" in higher education?

The team has been studying how Educational ICTs may contribute to social exclusion for certain groups in society. In the academic sector, we already have preliminary results on how gender, seniority, tenure and research activities influence the use of educational ICT. For example we have found that seniority exerts a positive effect on the use of EICT. This effect is unexpected and it is contrarily to the main findings in the digital divide literature.