

Welcome to Microlearning 2006 (Foreword)

Heidi Möller

Leopold-Franzens-Universität Innsbruck (Austria)

Dean of faculty of education

Thanks for inviting me to open this microlearning conference 2006, together with my dear colleagues.

As a dean of the faculty of education, you would think that I should be enthusiastic about new forms of learning and teaching, and about new digital possibilities of knowledge management.

But I'm not, and there is a great deal of internal resistance towards all those experiments of eLearning. I love to teach in big groups in a lecture hall setting, and I have lots of didactical ideas to make lectures interesting and interactive using big group moderation techniques. Also, I love to do lessons in small courses, where you can discuss more profoundly and watch the development of the students' personalities. It's great to be in direct contact with them, and to watch them developing creative potential.

I have strong reservations that this could be all over now.

ELearning as a cheap possibility of saving money in the area of teaching?? Isn't it that what this is all about?

Perhaps you think that this is just a gender problem, that women don't like to play with new technical equipment like computers? Elfriede Löchel's¹ studies have shown that an almost erotically relationship with computers and other technical stuff is found more often in the male world. According to her, women often look at these things as a dangerous threat, like a wild beast that has to be tamed.

1 Löchel, Elfriede (2001). Inszenierungen einer Technik. Frankfurt/M.: Campus

I hope very much, that this conference will convince me and perhaps other critics, that these concerns are not justified. I'm sure that there are many colleagues who have a very critical view of eLearning, but who just don't want to speak up. For many, it may seem old-fashioned not to be enthusiastic about new teaching methods, and hence they engage in something like hypocrisy management in looking at those new forms of learning and teaching, believing that they have to go with the mainstream.

I hope that this conference will be very successful and that it may also convince me of the positive aspects of these new techniques. In any case, I will try to do what I always did and recommend to everybody: be prepared for life long learning.

Thank you for your attention.