



8th ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education (ARC8)

Outlook 2030: Inclusive and Diverse Higher Education in Asia and Europe

ARC8 Inclusive Learning and Teaching in a Digital World

Session 3 | Friday, 5 March 2021

Memo

Prof Ulf EHLERS, Professor for Educational Management and Lifelong Learning Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University Karlsruhe, Germany



Ulf was asked to make a 10-minute presentation focusing on the following 3 questions to provide food for thought for the expert group:

1. What is your take, how inclusive are learning and teaching in the digital world? what is the status quo? Do you have any numbers to show?
2. What potential risks do you foresee that could jeopardize greater inclusion in learning and teaching in a digital world in the next 10 years?
3. What opportunities and leverage points do you see to promote inclusion in learning and teaching in a digital world the next 10 years?

Ulf began by establishing that “digital technology has the power to embrace, reach out, and provide opportunities to those who do not usually have access to higher education opportunities.” Ulf asserted that this is an important message considering that, in order to shape this world in a sustainable way, all the efforts of all people are needed. Ulf explained three main messages with regard to teaching in a digital world.

First, Ulf proposed that more thought be given to finding an open framework which enables an institution to discuss and decide their profile of inclusion, to put inclusion into the forefront by allowing an open framework for discussion. A framework that does not need to be unanimous in an entire country, across regions, or all over the world. Rather, what must be provided is a profile which is fit for the context where the higher education institution is set.

Ulf also presented multiple dimensions of inclusion, such as justice, equality, and excellence. According to Ulf, inclusion actually provides more opportunities to everybody. To leave nobody behind in higher education means to work for a more prosperous society and economy, student success, and equal opportunities. Ulf reiterated for emphasis, there needs to be an open framework which allows institutions to take their stand on inclusiveness and avoid having a vague idea of it.



Message 1: Let's discuss the principle

- What is the aim of inclusion?
 - Justice?
 - Equality?
 - Excellence?
 - Prosperity?
 - Student Success?
 - Equal Opportunities?
- Bodieau: Mapping different territories of inclusion

- The broad idea of inclusion is not operationalized. At the same time, inclusion may have different shades and shapes. For example, inclusion can be more than an economic inclusion. according to Pierre Bourdieu, inclusion also includes the dimension of association to some, which, to others may bear more weight and important.



Message 2: Level

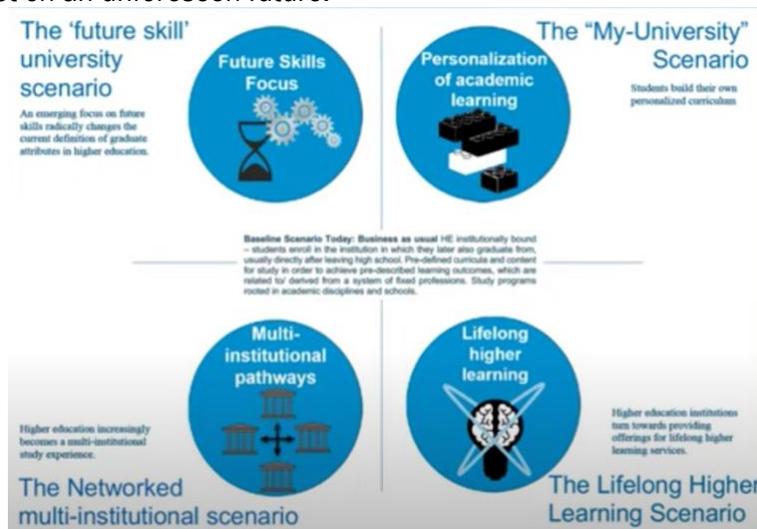
- Macrolevel
 - National/ regional Policy Making
- Mesolevel:
 - Institutions
 - Leadership
 - Institutional Policy
- Microlevel
 - Teaching/ Learning
 - Faculty
 - Dimensions of Inclusion

Second, the framework must act on certain levels of teaching and learning. Fostering inclusive learning and studying in higher education institutions must consider different dimensions:



Message 3 New dimensions?

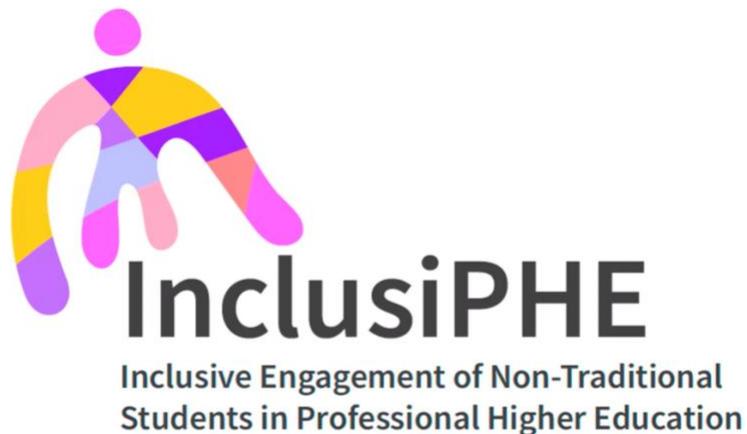
Third, Ulf delivered a message about dimensions which could lead to exclusion in the future. Ulf said that “equipping students with great knowledge will absolutely not be enough for a future in which they will have to work in, a society and economy in a labor market where the demand for professionalism is changing so quickly.” Thus, people must be equipped with larger competencies, action competence, and the ability to act on an unforeseen future.



According to Ulf, the future of higher education institutions will focus more on future skills rather than knowledge, much more on enabling lifelong episodes of academic education in a networked multi-institutional scenario. Because of this, Ulf’s advice is to focus on micro-credentials, alternative credentialing, which will allow students from other educational sectors or the vocational education sector to move seamlessly into higher education and continue their journey, in their way, in their professional life.



Ulf explained current projects which work in line with the three messages earlier stated, such as experimental projects and laboratories which include students in higher education in new ways. For example, there are podcasts wherein conversations included students talking about their needs. Ulf and his team are working on European project initiatives, the newest one was called *inclusive*.



InclusiPHE works at a meso level, often working with higher education institutions, to provide opportunities for non-traditional target groups, engage them in a better way, and break barriers. This project has been for running three years.



encore+

European Network for Catalysing Open Resources in Education

Encore is their European flagship initiative which works in providing the European network for open resources in education and to provide education also across borders.

After the presentation of Ulf, the Experts' Group proceeded to a **discussion, and questions and answers:**

Dr Wayne HOLMES, Consultant, Independent, United Kingdom

Wayne acknowledges how digital learning can include people, however, those who attend seminars are also those who have background in higher education. Thus, Wayne posed the question, how do we ensure that we don't increase the divide?

Response of Ulf, in Summary:

There is a need for a total systems approach. There needs to be efforts on all levels of governance and action on a national level. In Europe, it can be said that there are many efforts taken to make higher education or education in general more inclusive.

Ulf acknowledged that at times, there may be a tendency to believe that the great divide is not actually the digital divide. Technology was not always the breaking point, rather, the breaking point was the idea of education as a means to differentiate oneself in a mobile society to move upwards or laterally, so to speak.

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