

Presenter notes (APT2022 SDL):

Slide 1:

In this session, we will present the results of our case study research that is a joint cooperation project between the Research Cluster D²L² “Digitalization, Diversity and Lifelong Learning – Consequences for Higher Education” of the University of Hagen in Germany and the research program “Knowledge and Society” at the Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society in Berlin

D²L² is a central research institute of the University of Hagen: Over 50 researchers work here, using evidence-based knowledge in order to support and advance the transformation in education towards increased digitalization, personalized learning, adaptive systems, and artificial intelligence.

The Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society (HIIG) researches the development of the internet from a societal perspective in order to better understand the accompanying digitalisation of all areas of life.

In our research project, Organizational Adaptivity in the German Higher Education Context, we investigate the accelerated transition to digital teaching and the organizational factors that hinder and facilitate sustainable digital teaching practices at universities

Slide 2:

In this research project, we conducted 8 European case studies with a total amount of 68 interviews from three different leadership levels at universities (e.g. program level, faculty level and top level). The main research question we investigated was what organizational conditions drive and/or inhibit the implementation of digital teaching at universities. To get an overview over the research field we conducted an extensive literature review before our studies. The literature review revealed that the organizational perspective on digital teaching is indeed a research gap.

Now I would like to give you a brief overview of the research results. We will dive deeper into the research results on the APT conference on the first of July. Our main results refer to five prominent research topics, namely leadership, digitalization experience and digitalization strategy, infrastructure and resources, networks and Interaction of students and teachers.

Our research with regard to ‘Leadership’ indicates that university management (e.g. rectorate) as part of the top level leadership of the university play a significant role in steering the process of digital teaching. But teaching staff at lower levels of the hierarchy need a supportive environment that stimulates ideas and innovative experiments. This atmosphere is characteristic for highly motivated individuals who are driven by intrinsic motivation. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A second major research result is the effect of digital experience and digitalization strategy on the implementation of digital teaching. A main result is that the individuals are unaware of their institutions' digitalization strategies and lack of a common understanding of these strategies. The digitalization strategies and its applications are diverse and they are often disconnected from actual teaching practice.

[REDACTED]

With regard to infrastructure and resources, interviewees reported that an advantage for digital teaching was the implementation of digital competence centers that combine technical advice and didactical recommendations. Moreover, a main topic was scarce resources at the mid-level of the university. The financial incentives are often project funded in a competitive environment. This has disadvantages as many individuals struggle for scarce resources.

[REDACTED]

A major part of our respondents reported that they are organized in networks. These networks are collegial networks, that are built by individuals from the respective faculty and working within the same subject. As our data suggests, the middle management of the institutions plays a significant role in influencing these social networks. Nevertheless these networks are often composed of small groups and they are independent knowledge silos that share knowledge and accumulate digital competencies.

[REDACTED]



Our interview data shows that there is a challenge of social isolation in digital teaching rooms, because students tend to switch off their cameras. This is called the Black tile problem. Furthermore, a common challenge is that social isolation affects the mental health of students at the university and there is a need for structures that work against such health developments and issues. Social exchange is a fundamental solution to overcome digital isolation.

Slide 3:

What are strategies ...

... to overcome resistance to change?

... to bridge knowledge silos?

... to balance central and decentral initiatives?

What are your visions for the future of digital teaching?

If you could create an utopia with regards to the digitalisation of teaching, the best possible leadership and strategy processes, what would that look like?