ZekoLL
ZENTRUM FÜR KOOPERATIVES LEHREN UND LERNEN

IARIA

THM
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Opening up diversity-oriented learning access via E-Portfolios -
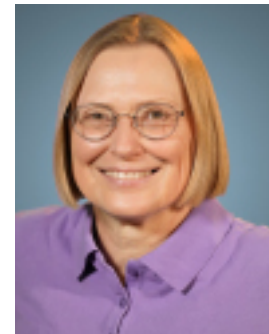
Opportunities and Challenges

Orientation
Structure of the presentation

❖ Who we are and what we do

❖ Our experience with e-portfolios

❖ Why we work with e-portfolios

❖ Examples

❖ Chances and challenges of working with e-portfolios

❖ Perspectives

❖ Conclusions

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Who we are and what we do:
Technische Hochschule Mittelhessen (THM)

THM is the fourth largest university of applied sciences in Germany and the largest in Hessia with approx. 17000 students on three campuses:

- Campus Gießen

- Campus Friedberg

- Campus Wetzlar (plus six satellite locations)

Among the guiding principles of THM, motivation, quality, agility and diversity are most important.
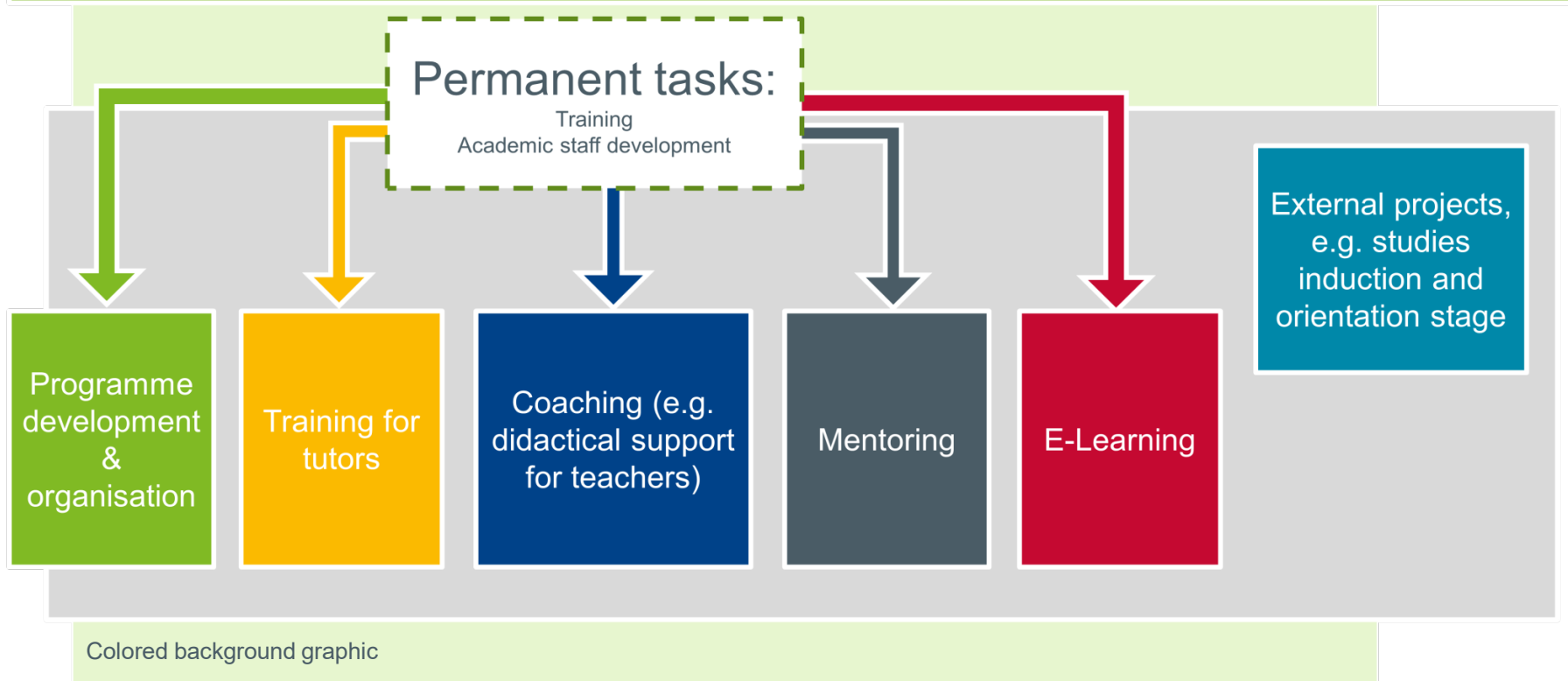
Subjects addressed are mainly engineering, computer science, biosciences, health sciences and business administration

Map of Germany

Who we are and what we do:
Center for Cooperative Teaching and Learning (ZekoLL)

ZekoLL – Centre for cooperative Teaching and Learning

Permanent tasks:
Training
Academic staff development

Programme development & organisation

Training for tutors

Coaching (e.g. didactical support for teachers)

Mentoring

E-Learning

External projects, e.g. studies induction and orientation stage

Colored background graphic

Our experience with e-portfolios:
The master's degree MEDIAN_HE

= Methodology and Didactics in Applied Sciences_Higher Education

Symbol image for teaching
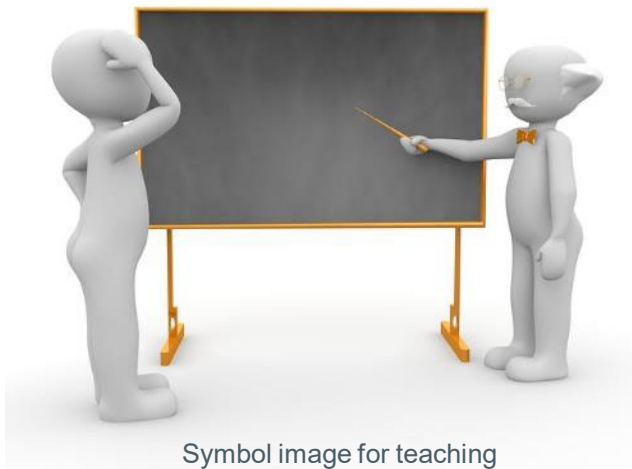
goals and focus

- professionalisation of teaching skills in the higher education context

- development of the teaching personality with a focus on cooperation

- Sustainable academic development for universities

- contribution to organisational development

Our experience with e-portfolios:
The master's degree MEDIAN_HE

The study course addresses teaching staff of all disciplines with a first academic degree, e.g. BA

Our students are diverse regarding

- **age**

- **professional experience**

- **academic field**

- **prior knowledge**

- **teaching experience**

- **residence / distance to university**

- **Individual situation, e.g. caring or health demands**

Symbol image for learning together

Why we work with e-portfolios:
What is an e-portfolio?

- An e-portfolio is **a digital collection of artefacts** that document an individual's learning, achievements and reflections.

- It serves **to make the learning process visible**, promote self-reflection and illustrate the development of skills and competencies throughout a learning process.

- It **encourages collaboration** and uses continuous feedback from peers and teachers, thus promoting critical thinking and openness in thinking, problem-solving skills and acceptance

- E-portfolios **can contain different formats** such as texts, images, videos and links, they offer a flexible way of presenting achievements.

- E-portfolios allow for a **high degree of autonomous, self-controlled learning processes** thus taking into account the Self-Determination Theory (Deci/Ryan 2002)

Why we work with e-portfolios:
Advantages for everyone

- Working asynchronously at individual pace

- Learning to use and to produce digital media, thus achieving Digital Literacy

- Developing a culture of sharing and collaboration: Students can organize themselves via the platform, thus getting to know and to support each other

- Cooperation is specifically enabled in a protected space
  - Learners decide for themselves who they share which content with

- Sharing different results broadens perspectives and the scope of ideas for everyone

- Learners can work with the applications they prefer and are familiar with, e.g. in a professional context

- Open to different disciplines and learning contexts

Examples:
E-portfolios with the platform mahara

- A content management system for e-portfolios, develop mainly in New Zealand

- Supports various file formats for designing and uploading content

- Includes sharing and collaboration features

- Contains tools for managing portfolios, also serves as an examination platform

Mahara follows the accessibility guidelines of the W3C

- Is continuously working on improving digital accessibility

- The platform offers features, such as:

  - Alternative text descriptions for images

  - Supports the use of keyboard navigation and screen readers

  - Good readability and contrast for users with visual impairments

Examples:
The Mahara - Website home page

Website screen shot

Examples of different portfolio designs:

Texts combined
with photos
and graphics

Video and audio
combined
with texts and graphics

Screen shot from Mahara

The example of the master's degree: MEDIAN_HE:
Blended Learning Concept with integration of e-portfolios

Moodle course · blended learning concept · teaching video · reflection paper

Module Didactics and Teaching Methods*

blog · podcast · video blog

Personal Learning Diary

cross media documentation of a case · examination practice question · analytic paper organisation development

Module Teaching Development in HE Context*

draft research design · reflection paper · research question · discussion of solutions

Master Thesis*

concept of a teaching session · draft module description · reflection-paper · documen-tation hospitation

Module Praxis Project*

scientific short essay · development research question · teaching diary

Module Reflection "Teaching Portfolio"*

counseling- & coachings-documen-tation · scientific poster · reflection-paper systemic perspective · exposé

Module Reflection "Study Portfolio"*

E-Portfolio over the whole study course

legend

example artifact

subportfolios *

subportfolios *

Bock/Thülen2020

Chances and challenges:
E-portfolios - added value for individual challenges

- You work online - with the digital accessibility tools you need

- The implementation can be very creative and individual through different media

- You work asynchronously, at your own pace

- There is motivation through a high degree of self-determination

- Your own choice of media allows you **to play to your own preferences and strengths**

- The e-portfolio **can replace or complement a face-to-face examination**

- Assessment catalogs can be adapted to the specific challenges
  so that different results are still assessed fairly and transparently.

- The **criteria must be disclosed by the teacher before** the examination or assessment

Chances and challenges:
E-portfolios - added value for individual challenges

All this can offer advantages for individuals

- with physical impairment:

  - Impaired vision, no vision and color vision impairment

  - Limited hearing, no hearing

  - Motor impairment

  - Reading and spelling difficulties and isolated reading disorder

- Impairments in the area of neurodiversity,

  - e.g., from the autism spectrum

  - or hypersensitivity

- And for people with

  - Test anxiety

  - Social phobias

Chances and challenges:
E-portfolios - added value for a diverse group of learners

- The exchange and collaboration within the group is encouraged

- Making contacts and communicating can be practiced online before meeting in the analogues world

- Regardless of the personal challenges the individuals have to deal with, everyone works at the same level on the same platform

➢ In the best case scenario, this **can overcome fears of contact and break down prejudices**.

Chances and challenges:
E-portfolios - added value for **lifelong learning**

- The concept of e-portfolios was developed for **school education**

- Today it is an integral part of **academic teaching and learning**

- Existing e-portfolios can be continued in **professional life** beyond the training phase:

  - They can serve as sound evidence of the individual competences already acquired.

  - They provide the documentation of continuing professional development.

  - They offer a competitive advantage in the application process for new professional challenges.

  - They can promote career advancement.

  - They can be used for knowledge management, collaboration and further development of companies.

Perspectives:
E-portfolios – for both learners and teachers

Limitations?

- **Affinity to digital media present or absent**

- **Maximum freedom can lead to excessive demands**

- **Competencies must be built up** (e.g. for producing digital media, feedback, collaboration and reflection)

- **Orientation must be provided**

- **Time and creative efforts required, both for learners and teachers**

- **Collaboration can be difficult with different media formats**

- **Tutorials how to produce media and create different artifacts are helpful**

Perspectives!

- **You learn to make sure you take everyone with you. This is also relevant for teachers!**

- **opportunities for different learning requirements**

- **Diversity-sensitive teaching is increasingly needed and individual learning encouraged**

- **A variety of learning opportunities is good for everyone**

Conclusion:

Challenges for teachers:

- Development of meaningful tasks and competent assessment schemes

- Systematic guidance for media use, cooperation, feedback and reflection

- High demands on teachers' feedback and media skills

- High assessment effort due to the uniqueness of each portfolio

- Individual and intensive support from teachers required, thus making possible intensive learning processes…

Benefits for learners:

- ….which is particularly beneficial for learners with special demands!

- Encourages learners to take responsibility for their learning process.

Conclusion:

Opening up diversity-oriented learning access via e-portfolios:

The potential identified shows us that further testing and development of the format is useful and necessary.

What do you think of our ideas and what are your experiences?
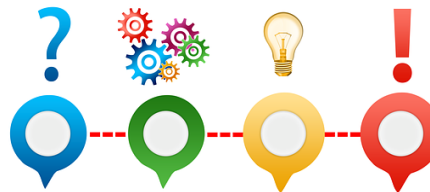
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