



ICT SUPPORTED COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT – WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES ICT MAKE?

Cecilia Bjursell, Mohamed Chaib,

National Center for Lifelong Learning ENCELL, Jönköping University, Sweden

In the Swedish adult education system, distance education is often presented as a solution for making education flexible and available to all learners. As a supporting device, ICT has been reported to enhance peoples' ability to develop capacity for learning and hence for professional competence development. In this contribution, we intend to scrutinize the veracity behind this assertion. Within the framework of the Swedish National Center for Lifelong Learning (ENCELL) we have been involved in several research and evaluation projects where ICT, in different forms, has been applied. We will take a closer look at two of these projects.

In the first project ITiS (ICT in School) the Swedish Government initiated a huge competence development of about 70 000 teachers in Swedish schools between the years 1999-2003. The main objective of this initiative was to develop new forms of cooperative learning with the support of ICT.

In the second project ECIL (European Certificate in Intergenerational Learning), the five European participating countries developed a distance education program that would be available in their home countries. A special focus on generational issues connected to ICT was addressed.

Out of the empirical evidences observed in these two research and evaluation projects we intend to review:

1. the distinction between the workplace related and the workplace situated competence development when ICT as a learning device is involved, and
2. if and how ICT as a tool for competence development contributed to make any difference for the outcome of learning for the individual learner, the working team and the organization.