

iatel

Call for Statement of Interest



TECHNISCHE
UNIVERSITÄT
DARMSTADT



GRADUIERTENKOLLEG
E-LEARNING

Interdisciplinary approaches to technology-enhanced learning (iatel) Conference, June 19th - 20th, 2009

E-learning is not a topic restricted to one single research discipline: within its scope technologies and individuals, individuals and communities, communities, technologies and competences all connect with one another. It is against this background that the DFG Research Training Group *Feedback-based quality management in e-learning* organizes the conference “**Interdisciplinary approaches to technology-enhanced learning**”.

Endowed with an equally strong interdisciplinary character, this Research Training Group has occupied itself during the past three years with the main question of how feedback-based processes can affect and improve “quality” in (and of) e-learning. It has done so from different perspectives, using different methods, which have been applied to different areas and teaching/learning scenarios, and with respect to different technologies. Despite the individual approaches of the separate projects, an increasingly collective - interdisciplinary - and common understanding has come into being. In an intensive and creative dialogue with experts, interested fellow researchers and “contrarians” this project understanding will be developed further.

The conference therefore announces itself forcefully as an interdisciplinary endeavour – both qua topics and qua format. External experts as keynote speakers and up-and-coming researchers from various disciplines are invited to join efforts and discuss the multifaceted topic of e-learning beyond individual disciplines and research communities. In the plenary sessions, the keynote speakers will accordingly form pairs with mixed disciplinary backgrounds, and the planned topic sessions will also have a multi-disciplinary attendance.

As a direct consequence of such an interdisciplinary approach, the conference format will not be defined by a preponderance of presentations and papers. In separately moderated and creative discussion forums, one is able to examine and work toward a common understanding of the issues at stake. Such an approach should also enable an assessment of how and to what extent the idea of interdisciplinary research is sustainable. Will it simply bring forth an only loosely fitting framework, or will it evolve into a truly encompassing project that leads to results, insights and solutions which go beyond the simple sum of the individual trajectories (cf. the PhD projects of the Research Training Group)?

Date

Submission Deadline:	March 01, 2009
Notification:	April 01, 2009
Conference:	June 19-20, 2009

Location

TU Darmstadt

Host

Federally funded Research Training Group
on Feedback-Based Quality Management in
E-Learning

Internet: www.gkel.tu-darmstadt.de/iatel
e-mail: gk-konferenz@gkel.tu-darmstadt.de

Topics

- Learning (in) Networks
e-mail: gk-session1@gkel.tu-darmstadt.de
- Learning from Learners?
e-mail: gk-session2@gkel.tu-darmstadt.de
- Disruptive or seamless?
e-mail: gk-session3@gkel.tu-darmstadt.de
- Quality and Competences
e-mail: gk-session4@gkel.tu-darmstadt.de

Pursuing the idea that in e-learning technologies and individuals, individuals and communities, and communities and competences are linked with one another, the conference will focus on the following questions, all related to interconnectedness and networks: how is one to understand the typical connection between individuals and communities in e-learning? How precisely do technologies and learners connect and interact? How is one to assess the “quality” of such interconnections?

Guidelines for submission

This conference addresses itself to all who conduct research in the e-learning-related fields listed below, and to all who have systematically evaluated practical experience and would like to introduce their own perspectives and research in what will be controversial discussion rounds. It furthermore addresses itself to all who are interested in the question of whether and to what extent interdisciplinary collaboration in the field of e-learning really “pulls its weight,” and to all who feel like stirring up the discussion somewhat with their own contributions (i.e.: “contrarians”).

Instead of writing an abstract or paper, interested persons are asked to apply for participation in the conference and one of its topic tracks by a letter of motivation of about two pages. This letter of motivation should outline (a) wherein your interests to participate in the conference and (b) wherein your own contributions to the examination of its subject matter could lie. Special attention should be paid to targeting one of the research themes listed below. The letters of motivation will be peer-reviewed by expert members of the Research Training Group and will, if necessary, be further substantiated together, to assure a common basic understanding of the subject matter. Afterwards, the statements could serve as a starting point to reconsider and rework your contribution, which might in the end – and after having passed a review committee assuring its quality – be included in a conference publication, along with the keynote addresses and summarizing reports of the topic sessions.

The letters of motivation should be sent as a PDF or word document of two to maximum four pages (no specific layout required), via email and with mention of the author's contact details. They will

be spent with the conference documents to the conference participants.

Submissions can be handed in for one of the following session tracks:

1. *From learning in networks to the learning network and back.*

In learning-oriented research, the focus usually lies on the learning individual. Yet recent developments (often caught under the heading of “web 2.0”) clearly show that both looser and more closely-knit communities have come to the fore in new ways, communities which praxis and development cannot be explained by a combination of individual processes only. The dynamics and rules that have developed here urge us to increasingly de-individualize our understanding of learning, respectively to include more strongly in our research the question of the relations and interaction between individual learning processes and the learning processes related to socio-technological constructions.

e-mail: gk-session1@gkel.tu-darmstadt.de

2. *Matching Learners and Technology I - Community-based adaptive systems: Learning from learners, a smart idea?*

“Learning” in e-learning principally happens in a technologically enhanced manner. Technology should, therefore, be a specific form of an effective, pedagogical scaffold. This seemingly self-evident statement, however, brings along major difficulties as soon as one goes into a full consideration of the ways and means, as well as the function of scaffolding.

How exactly is the human-computer interaction shaped by community-adaptive systems in particular? Is there not a danger for a human-machine short-circuit, whereby a technological system and its human agents mutually reinforce their routines or conduct (“good is, what is found good by many”; “helpful, what helps many”), and thereby block off exceptions to the rule, new ideas, unconventional solutions et cetera? Where lies the trade-off between adaptability and incentive?

e-mail: gk-session2@gkel.tu-darmstadt.de

3. *Matching Learners and Technology II - Disruptive or seamless: HCI in eLearning?*

Adaptability is, however, only one aspect of the learner-technology relation. Closely related to it is the question of how foregrounded or unobtrusive the technological scaffolding should be: should one hide from the learner the scaffolding, and thus attempt to shape the human-machine interaction without seams or ruptures? Yet, are not (medial) ruptures and disruptions of processes necessary from time to time, for instance to provoke meta-cognitive skills, which imply distance, thus enabling reflection?

e-mail: gk-session3@gkel.tu-darmstadt.de

4. *Dimensions of Quality and Competences*

There is, today, a general consensus that the quality of learning processes is measured by an effective furthering of competences. Yet upon closer inspection, even this seemingly plausible statement raises additional questions: can we come to an understanding of competences by considering the learning individual alone? How much of her or his competences are invested in the technology, of which (s)he makes use; how much in the community, of which he or she acts as a member? To what extent are competences measurable, when we can observe them through performance only? How “qualitative” are general elearning tools and platforms, when competences not only articulate themselves independently of individual disciplines, but also always already in relation to those disciplines?

e-mail: gk-session4@gkel.tu-darmstadt.de

Scheduled conference components:

- Plenary keynote addresses
- Plenary panel sessions
- Impromptu interventions during the sessions
- Discussion rounds during the sessions
- Regular plenary updates on the four sessions
- Social event on the evening of June 19th, 2009

Order of events and participation

These four research and discussion topics correspond to the four main conference tracks, organized over two days – mainly in parallel sessions, and with sufficient time for engaged discussions. Moreover, during the intermittent plenary sessions, updates on the four topic tracks will be communicated, thereby allowing for overall cross-reference.

Start of the conference: June 19th, 2009
End of the conference: June 20th, 2009