Learning Beyond the Classroom: For and About Older and Disabled People

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Abstract. The workshop will provide a forum for discussion for researchers, practitioners and designers interested in both the accessibility of technology-mediated learning for disabled and older learners or in the use of technology-mediated learning to teach professionals about the needs of disabled and older people. Expected outcome is a better understanding of the processes needed to raise the level of inclusion in higher education.

Keywords: Accessibility · MOOC · Elearning · Older learners · Disabled learners

1 Overall Concept of the Workshop

A number of studies [1, 2] have shown that eLearning platforms can be made accessible, although barriers require specific attention. While typical tasks such as navigation in learning materials, or participation in a forum or a wiki can be made accessible to learners even if they use assistive technologies or augmentations (e.g. subtitling to videos), more advanced tasks such as assessments (e.g. multiple choice quizzes) and the use of specialist notations (e.g. mathematics, chemistry, music) common in education require more advanced accessibility knowledge.

The right to equal access to the educational system has been strengthened by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [3] but only at a high level. Developing an action plan suitable for educational institutions at various levels includes both the need to review institutional approaches to identify and strengthen all stake-holders in order to develop more inclusive approaches in classroom teaching and distance education, as well as the provision of education about accessibility in the education system as well as particularly in technology industries. In addition, in an ageing society, life-long access to education is becoming an important issue.

2   Goals and Topics for the Workshop

The workshop will identify possibilities for making technology-mediated learning (TML) (learning, blended learning, MOOCs) more accessible and acceptable to disabled and older people. In addition, the workshop will analyse how TML can be used to educate professionals about the needs and wishes of disabled and older people in relation to technology. The accessibility of TML relates both learning design and the learning environment. This includes inclusive approaches to asynchronous/synchronous communication, and the accessibility of microteaching (e.g. in MOOCs). Even if the competence of both teachers and learners can be met, there is still a need to change existing practices related to TML. The workshop will discuss processes to activate all stakeholders related to TML. In particular MOOCs may be a new approach to attract teachers or trainers who encounter a deficit in their practices and who want to become more capable of addressing a wider spectrum of learners.

3   Organisers

This Workshop is organized on behalf of IFIP WG 13.3 HCI and Disability by:
Professor Gerhard Weber, Chair in HCI at Technische Universität Dresden. His research focuses on personalization of multimodal systems for the benefit of people with a disability.

Professor Helen Petrie, Chair in HCI at the University of York, current chair of IFIP WG 13.3. Her research focuses on the design and evaluation of technology for disabled and older people.

Dr Christopher Power is a Lecturer at the University of York. His research aims at creating interactive web systems for all, focusing on disabled and older people.

Dr Jenny Darzentas works at the University of the Aegean. Her research focuses on the design of accessible and usable content.

4   Expected Outcomes

This workshop will develop a better understanding of the processes needed to raise the accessibility of technology mediated learning for disabled and older learners and the methods and content to introduce accessibility topics into education at all levels.

References

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