



Virtual Schooling and the Future of Education: The VISCED Project

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A virtual school is a school where pupils learn mainly at a distance over the internet and any activity in a classroom takes no more than around 15% of study time (1 day per week in a full-time school). The pupils will normally be based at home (and in special cases, in hospital, in the workplace, travelling or in a custodial institution) but in some cases they may be at a „physical“ school – just not the school „at“ which they study.

Given current transformations in the education landscape, that of virtual school – as a model of education largely supported by ICT and delivered at distance – against more traditional school contexts is becoming an interesting concept.

VISCED is a two year European project interested in virtual schools for pupils from the early teenage years, up to and beyond the age at which compulsory schooling ceases (typically 16 to 18) but also students in the age range 18-21 – attending some form of “virtual college”.

.The overarching objective for VISCED is to identify and understand virtual schools across the world, not ignoring the US but focussing mainly on Europe and to some extent on other countries in the world which are often seen as relevant to Europe, such as the more prosperous nations (e.g. the non-European OECD and BRIC nations) and/or those with linguistic, cultural or political links to countries in Europe.

By doing this, and studying some virtual schools in great detail, the project wants to understand the reasons why some countries foster virtual schools, others discourage them and a third group (a large group including many countries in Europe) seem to ignore them, so to provide policy level recommendations in the field likely to support policy makers in making the best use of the most adequate education model for their needs.