Narrative Report “Get Online Week Dortmund 2015”

The “Get Online Week” was for the first time brought to Dortmund, a 600,000 inhabitant city in Germany. We are a group of 11 students in the third year of study in “rehabilitation pedagogy” and organized the GOW with our lecturer Dr. Bastian Pelka from Technical University of Dortmund.

We started way back in December 2014 by inviting all telecentres and related organizations in Dortmund to a conference. We discussed possible events and courses and built a network of more than 30 partner organizations in our city. Our partners are as diverse as the city municipality, the Stiftung digitale Chancen, O2 Germany, many schools, libraries, senior residences and workshops for people with disabilities.

We facilitated this network, exchanged ideas, initiated several newsletters, homepages and social network sites, did the public relations and coordinated all GOW related activities in Dortmund. As students of rehabilitation pedagogy we designed seven courses, each addressing a different target group of people who are at risk of digital exclusion by factors like disabilities, migration background or low education level; every course taking around one to two hours of lecturing time. We conducted 16 courses with around 170 attendees.

This is our narrative report.

„smartphones and tablets“

Our first course in the „Get Online Week Dortmund 2015“ was about barrier-free settings for tablets and presented applications for school. The course that took place in the “Albrecht-Dürer-Realschule” in Dortmund was attended by ten teachers, who were very interested. We mostly worked out the details with the headmaster.

Since it was our first course we didn´t know what we could expect and so we were very nervous. But we were prepared very well with a good structured and a well-thought-out handout for us and for our participants.
After a short introduction about the different system software of tablets, about „Apps“, risks and precautions during downloads of some applications, we were engaged with our main topic.

In preparation of the course we did research for a long time and found plenty of applications that are useful for different school subjects. We presented the applications, showed how they work and gave our participants a chance to try them on their own. All had much fun and communicated with each other. This way it was not only a frontal course but also an interactive course with much of time to try out.

At the end we went on to the assistance, which is installed in the system of iPads and helps people with some handicaps to use the iPad. All participants were very satisfied and reassured that our course came up to their expectations.

Our second course took place in an institution of “Bethel.regional” in Dortmund. There were six people with mental disability. It was our concern to show our participants the first steps of using a tablet.

At first we explained how to switch on the tablet and gave them some information about the basic functions. The second step was to learn something about the search engine „Google“ and to practice the download of applications in general. It was important for us to explain everything step by step and to wait for each participant to catch up. It was such a great help that we were supported by employees of the institution.

Our last course was held for 12 teachers in the „Schule am Marsbruch“, a special school for students with limited motor skills and learning disabilities. This course was very similar to our first one. The only difference was that we worked in groups of two people with two different software systems (Android and iOS).

The fact that all participants were on different levels in using a tablet displayed a big challenge for us. Most of the teachers were really competent and had a detailed knowledge about the tablets. Only a small part of the teachers had to be introduced to the use of the tablets.

Our aim for this course was to develop a general curiosity for the tablets, barrier-free settings and applications that support learning. We are convinced that we reached this aim because of the positive feedback we got from the participants.
“virtual paper chase”

Our course „virtual paper chase“ was a fun action! Our aim was to organize an exemplary trip to the zoo of Dortmund together with our participants by using the Internet. This way we wanted to train navigation skills that can not only be used in the virtual world but also in everyday life. The approach that is taught in our course can be applied to various places in Dortmund.

The first stop was in an institution for social psychiatry. The participants were really motivated and thankful for our instructions. In between we had a lot of time to use our new skills for individual interests. A one-on-one tutoring was nearly possible through the support of the employees. We are pleased to hear that the knowledge will be improved in a continuative internet group.

Another course took place in the “Elterncafé”, where parents have the chance to communicate with other parents. A social worker is available to answer any questions. Especially the fact that our participants all had migration backgrounds from many different countries, such as Indonesia or Ghana etc., made us include language and translation programs into our training.

The 3rd day we had a training in the CJD Dortmund, which contains a vocational training college for pupils with handicaps. A class of ten young people, studying home economics, took part in our project. Due to their advanced skills we adjusted the content of our training.

“basic knowledge of a personal computer”

The first course was held in the “Konrad von der Mark Schule” in Dortmund. The students were 13-14 years old and at least 6 students took part in this lesson. The second course was held in the library in Dortmund Huckarde. This library is close to a
public school and the students of the public school can use the library in their breaks. In this course 4 students took part and they were 12-14 years old.

Following topics were included in this 2 hour sessions: Orientation on the desktop, What is hardware?, What is software?, Open up the writing program on the desktop, How to use keyboard shortcuts, Online research about a regional topic etc.

The students were interested in most of the topics but the different knowledge of the students about using the personal computer was the reason why some students needed more time than other students for the same tasks.

Many students do not use personal computers at home because they have got their smartphone or tablet. Due to this fact it is important to show students how to use a personal computer. It is much easier to use a personal computer for simple things like writing and sending emails or applications.

We realized that for trainings like that it is essential to have a structured way of teaching the topics. Especially students need a ‘red line’ to orientate.

„Playing, Zapping, Clicking“

In "Playing, Zapping, clicking" we have focused on three issues: child protection on the Internet, online addiction and cyber bullying. During the „Get Online Week Dortmund 2015“ we offered two courses for parents and encouraged a total of 21 people in their competences.
Particular attention was paid to the issue of child protection on the Internet. In the first step we explained how to activate Windows Family Safety and create a user account with limited rights for children. Then we went on to the Safe Search Mode on Google and YouTube, often used clueless as first sites on the Internet. Alternative sites that can be set as welcome page and search engine for children were introduced. In addition, child-oriented social networks were presented and we referred to the opportunities and risks, as well as to the rules of behavior in social networks.

Previously, we had to summarize some guidelines that show parents when using a mobile phone makes sense and when using WhatsApp is more advisable. In addition, we gave advices of how to handle child protection of smartphones or which network operators offer other relevant settings.

With our lecture on online addiction we wanted to raise the awareness of parents for possibilities and hazards of the digital media. In times of digitization and the possibility of a continuous use of the internet (by using smartphones and tablets when traveling), it is difficult for children to regulate the time which they spend on the internet by themselves. A central aspect was the question of the characteristics of online addiction, how to prevent it and where to get help if the child is affected.

During the cyber bullying part of the course the main concern was to raise parental awareness for the topic. In the preliminary stages of the „Get Online Week Dortmund 2015“ it turned out that the participants’ children are much younger than expected. It became clear that the expectations towards the course were mainly based on childproof aspects. As a result the cyber bullying part faded from the spotlight and took only part as a stripped-down overview. In order to do this, this segment was restricted to the following facets: What is cyber bullying? How can parents prevent cyber bullying and react to it?, the legal basis in Germany and where to find additional help.

At the end of our courses the parents were given a handout with the most important bullet points and a guide to set up the Windows Family Safety at home on their own. In addition, the handout received addresses to helpdesks in Dortmund.
“safe handling with Facebook”

The course titled “Safe handling with Facebook” describes the content pretty well. The offer is about dealing with Facebook in a safe way.

Our concept is designed for people with mental disabilities. Therefore we tried to make the courses easy to understand. For those people it is hard to understand why they should not tell the whole world why they don’t like their colleague. They are not able to imagine that the whole world can read what they are publishing and they don’t think about the consequences. So we tried to communicate these things in our course in the “Get Online Week Dortmund 2015”.

In the first step of the course we introduce ourselves as instructors and told the people who we are and what we planned to do with them. In a second step they introduced themselves. To make it easy for them we made “Facebook Likes” to answer our questions in an easy way. An example is the question “Who has got a Facebook profile”. The participants were able to put the thumbs up or down. We also worked on a fake profile which offers a lot about the person we invented. The participants had the task to find out which information they’d better not publish.

After a short break we worked with laptops and tablets on their own profiles by showing them important things like blocking people they don’t like or how to find friends on Facebook. An important topic was to tell them that not every Facebook friend is like a friend in real life. Furthermore we showed them how to deal with personal approaches and who can see what the participants publishes.

All together we held three courses during the event week in cooperation with different institutions. The first course with five participants took place in co-operation with “Mobile e.V”. That’s an institution which helps metal handicapped people in their daily life activities. Nine people visited the second course in the “Werkstatt über den Teichen”, a sheltered workshop in Dortmund. The last course on Saturday with also nine participations took place in co-operation with “Lebenshilfe Dortmund”. This society, like Mobile e.V., supports people with mental handicaps in all daily life situations.
Most of the participants had a lot of fun and liked working with the tablets and laptops. Some of them were due to their complex disability not able to understand every content or to operate with the electronic devices but on the whole they understood the most important facts.

“application training“

The first course took place in a school in Dortmund and a second one in cooperation with the job center in Dortmund.

The content of the course was developed with the two partner schools. The schools wanted courses for mothers with migration background. The participants should learn how to write an application and CV on the computer and what is important about it. The next step was to learn how to send an application via E-Mail.

Today application and applying via E-Mail has become more and more important. Application papers are sent to the employers via E-Mail or questionnaires for an application have to be filled out online. Especially for adults who want to get back in work it is necessary to know how to apply. The application papers are the first impressions the new employer gets about a person. These papers are decisive whether the person will be employed or not. There are some formal rules for these papers.

The first course took place on Tuesday in the „Libellen-Grundschule“ in Dortmund. We showed two mothers with migration background facts about application papers and we produced personal application papers together with them. We answered their questions and they got check lists that should help them to produce a good application file. With the help of an USB flash drive they were able to take the documents home.

The second course took place on Thursday in the job center in Dortmund. The course concept was produced for the „Graf Konrad Grundschule“ in Dortmund.
school has no computers and so we decided to use a computer room in the job center. The course had five participants and we were supported by Miss Jagiela, an application coach of the job center, and a translator. This course was similar to the first one. At first we explained the importance of good application papers and in a second step we produced personal application papers together with the participants. They also got information about possibilities of further professional training.

The participants were interested in the topic and they asked a lot of questions. We hope that this application training has a positive effect on their lives and will help them to get employed. The cooperation with the schools and the job center was very easy and successful.

“information and prevention at the Anne-Frank-Gymnasium Werne”

The course “information and prevention at the Anne-Frank-Gymnasium” is the only offer which did not take place in Dortmund but in Werne. This is a little city in the Münsterland. The school works on a digitalization project with tablets for students at the fifth grade. As former students of this school we wanted to connect it with our project “Get Online Week Dortmund 2015” in a good way.

To prevent stalking or bulling and to raise the awareness of students about cyber mobbing in social networks and social communities like WhatsApp we held two courses to the topic “cyber mobbing” to the youngest people at the school. To inform the parents of the children we held one course for the parents on Monday evening to tell them facts about Facebook, twitter and WhatsApp and about data security in social networks. Furthermore we informed them about the course on Wednesday with the students of the fifth grade. Only four parents came to the evening. But they were very interested and because of the small number of people we had a good conversation and answered all their questions.

On Wednesday, during the “Get Online Week Dortmund 2015”, we came back to the school and held two courses for the students about cyber mobbing. We started with a video about a boy who had problems at school and in his private daily life because of cyber mobbing. We made clear that cyber mobbing can destroy lives and existences and concerns the whole life of the person who gets bullied. With a role play we made clear that there is a way out of cyber mobbing by talking about the problem with
people they trust. An aim of the course was to show the young students that cyber mobbing is a really bad thing and if they are involved someday there is a way out and professional help.

All together the participants were interested in the topic and cooperated very well. We think that the video and the role play left a mark on them and they remember us if they are ever in a situation like we just described. The headmaster was satisfied as well and will offer courses like this one in the future again.

Conclusion

The “Get Online Week Dortmund 2015” reached about 200 people. The course concepts, developed by the 11 students, will be used continually by the cooperation institutions. The media pedagogy network, which has been initiated by the project group, can now be used for further projects and cooperation for the theme of digital inclusion.

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