Online work-space-shared management to support collaborative learning: The case of the EsCAlADE trainning experiment

Abstract: There is a wide consensus that collaborative learning is effective for adult learners since they can share their experiences and build knowledge together. However, collaborative attitudes not always take place spontaneously in a group of learners. There are strategies that can facilitate collaborative learning and help learners to achieve effective results. In this paper we present some reflexions on an experiment of collaborative learning conducted with group of adults in Katowice - Poland.

Objective: to find the most appropriate and efficient methodology for Adult Education trainers, the improvement of adult education methods, overcoming the eventual digital divide in an IT based participatory approach; the enhancement of adult learning effectiveness by removing the impact of negative factors into adult learning groups; to produce practical tools for supporting and facilitating adult learning when an active/ participatory strategy is adopted.

Methodology: The analysis was based on the use of Pbworks as a collaborative platform within Adult trainers. They have analyzed and reported the positive and negative aspects of using this platform for the EsCALADE experiment course. The data used for the analysis were obtained through the use of content analysis of 4 trainning courses, including 15 webinars - publications directly aimed at the collaborative learning methodology and Pbworks guides. Content analysis was also applied to the comments and discussions related to these publications.

Results: The study showed potential functional solutions existing in the Pbworks environment from the point of view of collaborative learning. The results show that solutions of this type can be effectively adapted by most of the trainers supporting the Adult education, including stateholders responsible for building the competitiveness of the adult education. Results showed that about half groups actively used the workspaces to share resources, negotiate ideas, and coordinate their collaboration. On the other hand, using the workspaces helped the teacher to easily track and monitor the collaborative learning process, as the workspaces documented what group members did and how they gradually completed the assignment.

Limitations of the research: Formulated conclusions are limited by the specificity of the target group and the conditions of the environment in which it operates.

Practical implications: The ability to work and learn collaboratively is highly valued in today's education institutions and workplace. However, collaboration does not often naturally happen in a group. Certain strategies must be applied to coordinate individual efforts and monitor the learning process so that effective collaboration can take place.

Originality: The analysis goes beyond explored in the literature on the subject area. It fills the gap while the research in relation to the issue of the use of collaborative e-learning platforms.

Type of work: The paper presents the results of empirical research.

Authors: [1]Luis Ochoa Siguencia & [2]Gilberto Marzano

[1]The Jerzy Kukuczka Academy of Physical Education in Katowice
[2]Rezekne Academy of Technologies