

CASE STUDIES AND BEST PRACTICES IN GREECE

Erasmus+ KA2 project: “REACT - Creation of a Collaborative Environment in e-classrooms”

Intellectual Output 2 “Creation of a set of innovative activities, tools and educational collaborative methods adapted to a virtual classroom curriculum”

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”Collaborative learning supported by electronic environments. Case study in Language teaching in the third grade”

INTRODUCTION

Introduction of REACT Case study of best practices.

Following our research, a case study is going to be presented below implemented in the language teaching lesson in the third grade of a secondary school in Greece using e-learning collaborative learning environments. The purpose of the case study is to show how collaborative learning, both mediated and supported by the computer, affects the learning outcome and the corresponding objectives of the language teaching lesson.

This case study concerns the study and analysis of a teaching intervention - project, which was implemented in the 4th unit of the Language Teaching course in the 3rd grade. This intervention was developed in the online learning environment of the Moodle platform. Students were invited in groups to discuss - negotiate a problem and then jointly write a text. At the end of the teaching intervention, students were invited to participate in an interview to reveal their personal perceptions of the teaching intervention. The project explored the mode of operation and pedagogical potential of collaborative learning in e-learning environments, with regard to the development of language, learning and collaboration skills in the participating students.

OVERVIEW

Background information about the educational institute, its teachers, trainers, as well as learners. Information about the used and applied LMS and all other training methods applied while implementing inclusive and collaborative training, etc.

Methodologically, the study was based on the theoretical framework of social constructionism and on corresponding content analysis tools. Thus, for the analysis of the discussion-negotiation, Garrison et al.'s (2000) Community of Inquiry (CoI) models and Pena-Schaff's (2004) taxonomy of knowledge building strategies were utilized. For the analysis of changes in the collaborative text, Mak & Coniam's (2008) taxonomy of content revisions was utilized.

The purpose of this case study is to investigate the mode of operation and the pedagogical potential of collaborative learning in e-learning environments in secondary education and language learning. The study evaluates a combination of e-environments, collaborative learning and language development-improvement of secondary school students. More specifically, collaborative writing through text co-production in web 2.0 tools is also

addressed as a topic. The difficulty of the Greek educational system and other educational systems worldwide to escape from the strictly individual learning and assessment framework (Lund, 2008) is a challenge for the design and implementation of this study.

In summary, this study examines a teaching intervention in the 3rd grade language course and in particular in the 4th section of the school textbook. The topic of the unit is the European Union. The students are asked to plan together a virtual trip to Europe and to record their experiences in a collaborative text, which will be read by their parents who will be informed at the same time.

The project was developed on a digital collaboration platform.

The subjects of the study are, therefore, the following:

- the ways and results of students' discussion-negotiation. The discussion was conducted in a forum discussion area of the platform. The question raised was how knowledge was constructed through negotiation.
- the textual production in the shared writing effort on the wiki. This study investigated the patterns of collaborative writing and its effects on the shared textual product. The work was conducted in the wiki space of the platform.
- Students' perceptions of the way they work. Interviews were conducted with participants. As for the mode of study, methodological tools for content analysis were selected according to the type of work. The models of Garrison et al. (2000) and Pena - Schaff (2004) specialize in the analysis of asynchronous electronic discussions and decode knowledge construction patterns. The wiki change taxonomy of wiki, by Mak & Coniam (2008), was used for the analysis of wiki. The results showed that meaning and shared understanding of the topic was produced through group discussion-negotiation. Students interacted and collaborated to extract a common result of their search. The common understanding of the issue also allowed them to produce a textual product with predefined characteristics. This resulted in an improvement of their language skills. Finally, the interviews revealed the students' positive attitude towards this teaching intervention.

APPROACH

Explain solutions applied to resolve problems what regards creation and/or development of eClassroom which are inclusive and collaborative. Methods applied to boost collaboration and inclusiveness into the class, etc.

The case study is based theoretically and methodologically on the following pillars:

The first pillar is the use and exploitation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in secondary education and especially in language teaching.

The extensive international experience in the field of new technologies in language education is the central purpose of the literature review of this work, as it provides all those

theoretical and methodological aspects that are necessary to understand this scientific field in depth. In particular, emphasis will be placed on the understanding of ICT in language learning, since, according to the literature, a new kind of literacy is developing, more open and diverse than the traditional literacy of previous years.

The second pillar, and in direct connection with the first, is the analysis and literature review of the theories around the concept of collaborative learning. The study aims to show, through the study of reference sources, how different theoretical approaches perceive the concept of collaboration in education, what are the expectations and benefits of the shift from traditional, teacher-centred models to newer, learner-centred models based on students' own search for knowledge.

RESULTS

The main findings are presented. If it is possible, information in facts, numbers, etc.

The analysis showed that the students were actively involved in all stages of the planning and implementation of the project. They collaboratively developed the shared text according to the requirements of the research project and followed specific patterns and strategies of collaborative writing, with an emphasis on adding new text rather than editing or proofreading. The co-created text fulfilled the qualitative criteria set during the design of the intervention.

Thus, the students showed that they improved their language skills and worked independently.

The results of the analysis of the student interviews showed that they positively evaluated the teaching intervention and the educational experience through a collaborative e-learning environment.

The results that emerged from the study allow us to formulate the following propositions:

- Collaborative writing as a learning practice presented a number of advantages and positive aspects related to authentic learning activity, students' digital literacy and the production of textual products characterized by variety, multimodality and authenticity.
- Students' participation seemed to be encouraged by such activities. Group work, opportunities for self-direction, taking initiatives and real-world simulation learning activities encouraged students to be actively involved in the process.
- The textual basis of discussion, negotiation, (joint) elaboration of positions and opinions improved the language level of the participants.

- The Moodle platform was a very good technological tool for such teaching interventions.

The personalised use and choice of multiple learning activities, the security of the medium, the conditions of communication and interaction it ensures, were elements essential for the development of counterpart projects, which could possibly be fully integrated into the syllabus.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions are presented. Conclusions should be short and informative.

In conclusion, this case study provided important findings on the role of collaborative writing, which enhanced the sample students' language skills, their digital literacy, as well as other qualitative characteristics of learning through online environments (collaboration, autonomy, authentic learning). Finally, it highlighted the possibilities of integrating collaborative learning e-environments into the teaching of language in secondary school.

New approaches to teaching and the way of understanding learning are a prerequisite for integration in a technological, social and educational environment that is in constant change. On the one hand, the constructivist theories define scientific research and directions of educational practice. On the other hand, technological developments have a supportive effect on educational practice, on the one hand because the teacher has more tools at his/her disposal, and on the other hand because students are increasingly becoming familiar with and autonomous cognitively and learning through the use of these tools. From a third perspective, educational practice must take into account the requirements of school education and official educational policy as expressed through curricula and frameworks.

The author's concluding observation and pedagogical thesis is that new technologies have come into the lives of students long before formal educational practice has discovered areas of application. This introduction has been done in a superficial, superficial or distorted way (social media, virtual gaming environments, etc.). An educational objective can be to bring students closer to ICT and to discover knowledge while cultivating critical thinking.