

LABLEARNING

MEDIA BASED EMPOWERMENT FOR DISENGAGED YOUTH



THE LABLEARNING GUIDE COLLECTION



NR 12

Basic evaluation platform for media based laboratories for disengaged youth

The LABlearning Guide Collection offers inspiration, tools and principles to establish empowermental media based learning facilities for disengaged youth.

The Guide Collection offers around 20 different guides, including the full collection of guide material. The media based learning initiatives are contributing to re-thinking learning and to the creation of 21st century learning opportunities for young people.

The LABlearning Guide Collection is synthesizing theory and practice from such approaches as media learning, game based learning, project based learning, entrepreneurial and community based learning. The Guide material emerges from extensive literature studies, the Intel Computer Clubhouse Network's 20 years of experience, as well as from LAB practice in Catalonia Spain, Holland, Italy and Denmark.



The LABlearning Guide Collection is produced by the Comenius LABlearning project 2011-13, funded by the European Commission. The material is openly available to all non-profit users. More information about the project and the partners on www.LABlearning.eu

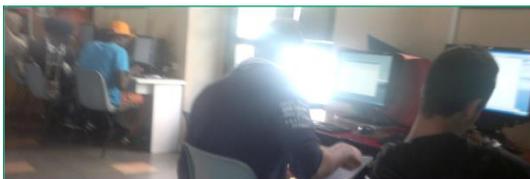


Evaluation tools for media based laboratories for disengaged youth

In this paper you will find guidance on how to evaluate outcomes of media based laboratory learning for disengaged youth.

The evaluation approach is qualitative observation and based on observed differences between *expected* and *de facto* outcomes.

The approach is simple and can be used by all staff in media labs.



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YOUTH MOTIVATION AND INTEREST IN LEARNING

EXPECTATION

The young people demonstrate an increasing interest and involvement in the learning processes during the LABs activities

LAB activities will offer the young people opportunities to “make things”, socialize, explore new technical tools ... in ways which entail learning as part of the process, and not always easy learning: LAB activities will be designed to be “hard fun”. As proof that this offer is working, we expect young people to show interest in this learning experience, reflected into growing involvement and participation into the LABs activities.

Observable aspects to document are:

- the young people attendance in LABs activities and the intensity/duration of their presence
- their ability to sustain involvement in learning activities for longer periods
- the active participation in LABs tasks and related enjoyment(shown or declared)
- the evolution of effort and roles played in the activities (so called “trajectories of participation”) from more passive and peripheral positions to more active and central ones

Attendance may depend on LABs organisation and rules. Young people may or may not be able to choose if to attend LABs activities and for how long.

Attendance tracking tools used by mentors and trainers should provide evidence of quantitative aspects of participation (including drop-out rates).

EXPECTATION

The young people demonstrate increasing self-esteem and self-confidence

Increased self-esteem and confidence - and agency to follow on own interests- are expected to stem from several processes and events such as: reaching the goals set in a project by the young people; being effective in presenting them and receiving a positive feedback from others; getting encouragement and support by mentors and trainers and peers in addressing setbacks; and so on.

Observable aspects to document are:

- the change in youth perceptions of their self-esteem and confidence and their awareness and agency to follow on own interests
- the processes and events like those mentioned above that are deemed relevant as change drivers

EXPECTATION

The young people demonstrate a change in their general attitude towards learning and related “hard work”, and towards education in general

This expectation refers to a broader change of mentality; beyond the specific LAB experience (see expectation 1), w.r.t. the role/value of learning in young

peoples' life: from "It's not for me. I am not good for it!" before, to "It can be important to me. I can make it!", afterwards. This change is expected to stem from a positive experience made by the young people in the LABs - which should prove to them that learning "can be different"- and from the young peoples' personal development (see expectation 2) leading them to feel that learning can also be for them.

Observable aspects to document are:

- the change in youth discourse towards school, learning and education in general
- the youth "sense of" and expectations about the future
- the youth "satisfaction" with their LABs experience



MEDIA CREATIVITY

EXPECTATION

The young people are able to use technology for creative production

This expectation refers to the diversification and enrichment of technology use by the young people. A consumerist attitude and strictly entertainment and personal communication purposes dominate media practice among young people. The expected shift should be toward the "production of something" that reflects the interest, talents and aspirations of the creator/s. The LABs will offer several opportunities to undertake creative production activities. This evolution in technology use is desired because it stimulates and entails acquiring important abilities (see other expectations below) and should contribute to the change of young peoples' motivation and interest in learning discussed before.

Observable aspects to document this outcome are:

- the products, material and other evidence from the young people's projects
- the reflections that young people will make about the character, motivations and purposes of their projects/results, including in public presentations

EXPECTATION

The young people are able to explore, learn about and use (including in unexpected ways) a variety of media tools in their projects and teams

This expectation refers to what is also known as "technology fluency", i.e. the capability of using existing resources and developing the additional skills required for applying technology in projects and towards goals which users find interesting and valuable. Technological fluency is developed by learning other complex skills beyond technical ones, such as: the ability to learn collaboratively; problem solving and project management skills; self-expression and communication abilities; learning to learn.

Observable aspects to document this evolution are:

- the breadth of technology use (i.e. the range of different technical activities young people engage with, and tools they use); their learning achievements; and unexpected outcomes: "I never thought I could reach that" ...be that an acquired skill or a product feature
- the reflections that young people will make about the technical activities they engage with, the tools they use and their learning experience, including in particular with respect to peer support and collaboration in technology learning
- what will be said/showed about these aspects in the presentations that young people will make about their projects/results
- technology use related to LABs tasks taking place not just in the school/educational context but also in a continuum with other situations

EXPECTATION

The young people are able to better express themselves and communicate in new ways

LABlearning puts much emphasis on creative expression/production (as many results might consist of media content of some sort, a video, an art work etc.) and on the communication by young people of project ideas, reflections, results etc. hence on the development of the very skills that make them possible. On the other hand, the use of new media in LABlearning is expected to support and enable the young people in expressing themselves in more creative ways and communicating more effectively. For these reasons, expression and communication skills (among other Life or 21st Century skills) are highlighted and specifically addressed in the evaluation.

Improvements in these dimensions can be observed similarly to expectation 4 and 5 - they are after all an important component of creative production and (collaborative) technology learning/use - in:

- what the products, material and other evidence from the young people's projects show about their expression and communication abilities
- the content and medium used for the reflections that young people will make about their LABs experience
- most of all, the presentations that young people will make about their LABs experience, as communication abilities are a fundamental aspect of these deliverables/events



COMMUNITY INTERACTION

EXPECTATION

The young people are increasingly able to establish contacts with people and professionals in the surrounding community that can make a positive contribution to their projects

LABs activities are expected to stimulate and encourage young people to look for and take advantage of external resources that may bring useful input to their media projects. This expectation thus refers to the development and application of young people abilities in searching, making contact and carrying on effective relationships with professionals and other people living in the local community and beyond (important links may also be established at a distance through the internet). This evolution implicitly reflects a growing acknowledgement by young people of the value of such relationships.

Observable aspects to document this evolution are:

- the breadth (number and variety) and depth (intensity) of involvement of external resources in young people projects

EXPECTATION

The young people show an increasing interest in making their work useful to people in the community

This expectation refers to the growth promoted by LABlearning among young people of authentic problem solving abilities and constructive social awareness. These can be developed by applying the young peoples' efforts and skills in addressing substantive (usually complex) social and other issues which affect the community where they live, rather than artificial tasks.

Observable aspects to document this evolution are:

- the interaction (especially in the project definition phase) with people in the community to understand their problems and needs
- the nature of goals ultimately set by young people to their projects

- the involvement of local community members in the presentation of project results and feedback gathering processes



LAB DIDACTICS

EXPECTATION

The human resources in the laboratories have enacted pedagogical principles that foster motivation, learning and creative production among the young people

This expectation refers in particular to the following principles:

- Mutual trust and respect - participants in the LABs should feel confident that their ideas, contributions, and comments are treated with respect (this engenders self-esteem of the young people who have most of the time a poor image of themselves as learners)
- Relevance - participants in the LABs should as far as possible be allowed to define their project and learning goals w.r.t. what they find relevant in life
- Challenge and support - participants in the LABs should face challenging, but manageable tasks. Failure should be accepted and learning from mistakes encouraged
- Self-guidance - participants in the LABs should be allowed as much self-guidance and self-directed learning as possible. Patience and asking questions rather than providing assignments are key ingredients for this
- Ownership - participants in the LABs should feel that they are in control of the learning they do and have a sense of ownership (this should stem much from the previous three principles)
- Collaboration and sharing - participants in the LABs should be prompted and supported in working with others and sharing openly what they do and learn
- Reciprocal relationship where participants are both teachers and learners should be acknowledged and encouraged

The application of these principles is expected to shape the “atmosphere”, rules and organisation of LABs activities; the goals and execution of young people projects; the relationships among participants and most other aspects of the LABs. For this reason, attention to the application of these principles and to the likely obstacles faced will be included across all project documentation processes.

In particular, mentors and trainers will be asked to consider/refer to these aspects as systematically as possible in the documentation of their activities and in their reflections. Interviews with mentors and trainers addressing specifically these aspects are also envisaged.

The point of view of young people on these aspects is also very important and should emerge from their reflections and interviews.

EXPECTATION

The laboratories are able to offer the young people a variety of relevant media tools and adequate conditions for their use

Providing young people with a rich and fully operational mix of technical tools and services for creative production is a fundamental aspect of the LABlearning approach.

Observable aspects to document this expectation are:

- the mix of media tools available in the LABs
- the presence of conditions needed for their regular and full operation, in particular: timely technical assistance, adequate broadband connectivity, access from the LABs premises to relevant online services (e.g. social networks)

The laboratories are able to link the projects to the community and to interact with relevant players outside the laboratories

The openness of the LABs activities and the promotion of exchanges with the local community are also important features of the LABlearning approach.

Observable aspects to document this expectation are:

- the inclusion of community members in LABs activities
- the organisation of outreach activities and visits in the community
- the establishment of some form of collaboration with external organisations



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Much more on www.LABlearning.eu

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The LABlearning consortium offers

Counselling on media laboratories for disengaged youth for national and European educational policy-makers

Collaboration on the establishment of media laboratories in formal and non-formal contexts for institutions and communities

Training in managing media laboratories for disengaged youth for teachers, mentors and youth workers

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The LABlearning consortium offers its services on non-profit basis and always links the media laboratories to 21st century learning.

21st century learning in action

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LABLEARNING



MEDIA BASED EMPOWERMENT
FOR DISENGAGED YOUTH



Penja un video ▾



Experience the direct voices of the young people on



With English subtitles

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The 37 minutes video **Joves i Futur** is created, designed and produced by young people in Salt-Girona Catalonia participating in the EU LABlearning project. Their work is much appreciated, as are their open statements in the video.

The project wishes to thank both the youth teams and the mentors working with them!

The video, other videos and 20 different LABlearning Guides are openly available on

www.LABlearning.eu