

LABLEARNING

MEDIA BASED EMPOWERMENT FOR DISENGAGED YOUTH



THE LABLEARNING GUIDE COLLECTION



NR 3

The basic LABlearning principles

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.

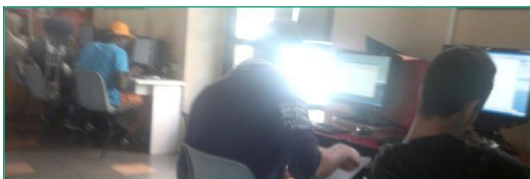


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The basic LABlearning principles

LABlearning is a pragmatic mix of problem based learning, media based learning and collaborative learning principles, and... In this text we describe the basic principles of LABlearning in very few words. LABlearning is not about theoretical dogmatic, but about exploring a variety of creative, inclusive and productive learning practices.



Responsible for the texts
Jan Gejel
Stefano Kluzer
Luca Botturi

Responsible for final edition
Jan Gejel

Photos are from Catalan and Italian
media labs

LABlearning official contact
Mireia Masgrau
mireiamasgrau@gmail.com



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...Re-think learning

To take full advantage of new technologies, we need to fundamentally rethink our approaches to learning and education— and our ideas of how new technologies can support them.

Mitchel Resnick, MIT Media Lab - *Rethinking Learning in the Digital Age*

What motivates LABlearning is the fact that in many member states, many young migrants and youth who need special attention are not doing well in the education system.

This poses a great and serious challenge to EU education systems, especially for primary and secondary schools as well as initial vocational training.

Most research as well as everyday evidence confirms the general impression of the existence of an increasing mismatch between the media culture of young people in the new generations and the classroom didactics, the traditional way of organizing education in EU throughout centuries.

Moreover, much evidence indicates that these groups of young people are, in fact, able to learn, and often quite talented.

But they learn differently from the standard-students of the traditional education system.

LABlearning will take the learning into the media world of youth at risk, instead of asking them to leave their media world and enter the old classrooms.



...Hard fun

ENTERTAINMENT?

When we change the traditional classroom teaching into active and project based media labs, are we doing this to make the learning more *entertaining*?

Do we need to change the classrooms because the young people are *bored*?

Because they are used to music, films and YouTube all day long? *Is that it?*

Perhaps many young people really *are* bored in the classrooms, but that's not the point. The media labs are not created to entertain the young people.

Some people think of the media labs as a place where the young people can do whatever they like, play computer games, search the YouTube and play with music and update their Facebook.

Some people think we make media labs to *please* the young people... To be more "like them" and their life...

However, this is not the case. On the contrary.

MORE CHALLENGING, MORE WORK...

In fact, the young people will be working much harder than in the classrooms. Some of them might not like that at the beginning, but the media projects must be so exciting, so *seducing*, that the young people will slowly start to engage themselves more and more in the project missions. The idea is that they will experience *immersive learning*. Learning that makes you forget that you are learning, forget yourself...

The extensive use of all sorts of state of the art media is not to entertain the youth teams, but to allow them to unfold and express themselves - and to start learning with the media tools they use in their social lives.

Most young people, and disengaged young people in particular, are not used to do this. They might be media fluent as to specific social ways of using media, but they are certainly *not* media fluent for learning...

For many young people learning with media and in media projects will be very hard work. They will be challenged in the media projects in ways they have never experienced before. They will be taken seriously, and they will be seriously challenged...

Why do we believe that they will engage in such challenges - instead of quitting and dropping out...?

THE PROJECTS

Because they will experience a new way of feeling personally involved in all parts of serious projects.

They are not used to this.

The projects are real-life projects, often defined and carried out in collaboration with people or organisations from the community - a bank, a kindergarten, a school, a theatre, the local NGO for sustainable energy, an elderly centre, etc.

The youth teams will be engaged in defining the mission, in the project planning, in the research, in the dialogues with the clients, in advanced media work and in producing and presenting the outcomes of the projects.

They will not be able to do this. Neither will the mentors. But they will learn to do it on the flight - they will learn by doing...

The important thing is that the projects must be *real-life* projects, have a *clear mission* and must deliver useful *outcomes* for the students, the school, the client or the community.

HARD FUN

Media is used extensively in all phases of the projects, because it allows a great variety of expression forms and the youth teams to form and unfold content in all sorts of ways.

And the extensive use of media encourages critical dialogues on design, usability, aesthetics, etc. - This is hard fun.

It is not entertainment, but hard work that is also fun. It can be hard work to learn to edit a video at high level, but it is also fun. Not entertainment, but fun, pride, overcoming obstacles, taking new steps, showing your work to other people... using your own special talents, or finding new...

And first of all: *feeling involved, accepted, respected, dedicated, almost forgetting yourself...*

The Intel Computer Clubhouse Network offers 20 years of experience in this field. And bottom line is: yes, it can be done, yes it is happening...

So, hard fun. Does this mean that the young people cannot play computer games in the media labs?

No. They can use computer games for learning. Or, they might design a game themselves. Or design some of the projects using strong game principles from good digital games. *Production, not consumption...*

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...The basic LABlearning principles

[SET-UP]

LABlearning is not about classrooms and teaching. LABlearning is about establishing a laboratory of learning in which the learners take part in all processes, including defining the learning missions. The laboratory metaphor signals experimentation and exploration and trying out different pathways, including taking risks.

[PROBLEM BASED]

LABlearning includes learners' participation in defining and understanding the learning missions, as well as participation in the organisation of the learning activities. LABlearning sets out from a problem or a group of problems, from which the mission can be defined.

Learning based on problems and challenges, and not on the consumption or transfer of ready-made knowledge, aims to increase the *learning to learn* capacity and motivation of the learners.

[LEARNING AS PRODUCTION]

LABlearning is about a laboratory in which knowledge and competences can be produced, instead of being re-produced. The production of knowledge and competences encompasses both the mental and collaborative construction of knowledge from a variety of sources, as well as the production of digital and physical products.

[PRODUCING FOR OTHERS]

As much as possible, the learning productions should be made useful to other learners, or to people in the community.

The *producing for others* should not be reduced to simulations, but should as far as possible aim to create and circulate real and useful knowledge and competences in the community.

[OWN TALENTS AND ASPIRATIONS]

No matter the topics and contents of the learning, the learning should link to the learner's own talents and aspirations: to what the learner is good at, and to what the learner *would like to* be good at.

This includes technological talents, artistic talents or different forms of technical skills - or entrepreneurial talents...

[COMMUNITY APPROACH]

LABlearning should open the doors to relevant resources in the community that might be included in the learning mission, or might benefit from the produced knowledge and competences.

[MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY]

LABlearning should include all sorts of state of the art, emerging and social technologies to allow the learners to be creative and express themselves to the max, collaborate in virtual environments, to enhance the learner's mastery of

media technologies, and to exploit the great learning potentials of interactive technologies, including media production and digital games.

[ATMOSPHERE]

LABlearning should not smell like “school”, but should offer an open environment, based on mutual interests, trust and respect, in which the different players jointly pursue their learning goals and help others reach theirs.

The supportive LABlearning environment should be accompanied by clear and strong challenges and hard fun, demonstrating that learners and learning missions are taken very seriously.

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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.

