LABLEARNING

MEDIA BASED EMPOWERMENT
FOR DISENGAGED YOUTH

LAB
learning

THE LABLEARNING
GUIDE COLLECTION

NR 8
How to capture the youth voices?

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.

www.LABlearning.eu

QUALITY
APPRECIATED BY
EUROPEAN YOUTH

NO MANUALS,
LOTS OF
INSPIRATION...

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The material is openly available to all non-profit users.
More information about the project and the partners on
www.LABlearning.eu

How to capture the youth voices?

Mentors and youth workers are in constant dialogue with the young people in the media labs, but from time to time it is very important to establish small time-outs and in a more systematic way try to evaluate the impacts of on the young people – in formal as well as in non-formal settings.
This guide offers a little input on this.
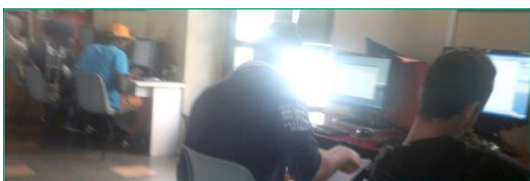
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... Constantly dialoguing with the young people involved

We must practice what we preach.

It is not useful to initiatives like LABlearning to deduct the laboratory and learning principles from a theoretical framework and then force these principles upon the youth groups.

Therefore such initiatives should link directly to the needs and interests of disengaged youth by capturing the voices of the youth, in informal as well as in formal ways.

In order for the dialogues to develop along broadly similar lines and to provide guidance for teachers or mentors who might need it, we provide the following list of Guiding Questions.

Please be aware that the way you put these questions might vary considerably from the expression forms used in this paper. A question can be put in many different ways and should be very *context sensitive*.

The context must be very informal!

And anonymity should be an option, if so wished by the young people.

Also, we don't believe that you can really go through all the individual questions during a dialogue, as there are just too many. So we group the questions under titles which make explicit the "ultimate aim" of each set of them. It will up to you to select and articulate the specific questions as you feel more appropriate.

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PART 1

CURRENT SITUATION AND EXPERIENCE IN THE "TRADITIONAL SCHOOL" PERSPECTIVE

Perceived strength and weaknesses of the (current/recent past) school/education situation

1. *How to you feel being a student here?*
2. *Do you like being a student; do you like what you are doing?*
3. *How do you feel about being in a class and about the teaching?*

What/how do you like to learn things + perceived personal strengths/abilities?

4. *What kind of "learning" do you like; what kind do you not like? Why?*
5. *What kind of activities in the school do you prefer?*
6. *What do you feel you are good at and not so good at?*
7. *Are there things you really like or that you are good at that you cannot work on in the school?*

Current use and desired/potential use/knowledge of digital tools/media

8. *Do you like using computers, mobiles, internet and things like that?*
9. *What are you using these things for?*
10. *Have you tried to work with computers in other ways, like more for learning something, more challenging?*
11. *Would you like to use more technology in school, and for what?*
12. *Would you like to learn more about computer programs, video, animation or things like that? Why?*

PART 2
BEYOND THE "TRADITIONAL SCHOOL" PERSPECTIVE

Learning elsewhere and learning differently: does it happen, could it happen?

13. *Do you think you are learning anything outside the school?*
14. *(in case of negative answer) Do you think you could learn something if you were not in a classroom?*
15. *Can you think of other ways of learning things?*

Could this different perspective be brought into the school, and how? Ideas, suggestions, desires...

16. *If you could choose, how would you like to work in the school?*
17. *How would that be good for you, why would it make you interested?*
18. *Would you like to be involved in such projects, like working more with computers, multimedia, etc.? Why?*
19. *Would you like to work more with computers, video, animation, etc. after school? What kind of things? Where?*
20. *If there were no "teachers", how would you learn something in school?*
21. *Would you like to try to organize the things in school without a "teacher"?*
22. *What would make you like "learning"?*

Leading to post-meeting documentation

23. *Do you want to talk more about all this later? How can we do that?*
24. *Would you like to describe what you have said with some kind of media? Like what? How would you like to do that?*

One or two adults engaged in the project invite the young people to talk about school, being a student, the classroom, the teachers, and what they think about all this, and especially how it might be different? The Guiding Questions above should help in this.
If the young people have nothing to say, it might be because you are not asking them the proper questions – or perhaps you are doing it like a teacher!!

ADULTS' PRESENCE AND ROLE IN THE MEETINGS

Adults working with the young people (teachers, mentors, whatever...) can be present in the dialogue (they are highly likely to request this), but they should not be left alone to run the meeting. A LAB coordinator should participate and actually "guide" the discussion. We need someone with a solid understanding of the purpose of the Youth Voice "operation" and able to guide the interaction towards its intended aims.

ABOUT RECORDING THE EXCHANGES DURING THE MEETING AND AFTERWARDS

Some adults involved might prefer not taking notes during the dialogues, whereas others would rather do it. We recommend talking about this with the young people at the beginning and agree with them about whether and how to record anything DURING the dialogue with photos, video or by taking notes.

For sure, the young people should be invited to express what they have said with whatever media they prefer also AFTER the meeting. A clear DEADLINE should be given for this - one week might be enough.

Such post-meeting activity would be extremely useful for documentation purposes and because even in small groups some people might refrain from speaking or from thoroughly expressing their views, so having a "second chance" to do this on their own might produce more interesting and authentic narratives.

Of course, we cannot oblige anyone to do it, but we should strongly encourage participants in the dialogues to produce such follow-up contributions.

For this, after raising the issue with guiding questions 23 and 24, the message should be "We would very much appreciate if you could provide us with some additional and/or more precise views, ideas, comments etc. about the things that you feel are most important among those that we discussed today".

Since the dialogues will most likely produce disparate materials, we propose the following structuring and processing of the dialogues' outputs so as to make it easier to analyse and consolidate them.

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. **Q 1-3**

Perceived strength and weaknesses of the (current/recent past) school/education situation

Please summarize what is the prevailing student/young peoples' opinion about their school and their student experience.

First select one of the following options and then provide a more qualitative description.

> The opinions of most participants are negative
> The opinions of most participants are positive
> Some participants have a prevailing positive opinion and others a negative one
> Participants mostly have a mixed/balances opinion; they see both negative and positive aspects

Qualitative observations:
Free text ⇒

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. Q 4-7

What/how do you like to learn things + perceived personal strengths/abilities?

Please summarize what is the prevailing student/young peoples' opinion about their day-by-day learning experience at school.

First select one/more of the following options and then provide a more qualitative description.

- Most participants enjoy the activities they do at school
- Most participants do not enjoy the activities they do at school
- Participants are divided on this aspect (some are positive, some negative)
- Participants mostly have a mixed/balances opinion; they see both negative and positive aspects
- Most participants feel that they cannot do at school the things they like best or are good at
- Most participants feel that they can do at school the things they like best or are good at

Qualitative observations:

Free text ⇒

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. Q 8-12

Current use and desired/potential use/knowledge of digital tools/media

Please summarize what is the prevailing student/young peoples' situation with regards to current and desired/potential use of digital tools/media.

First select one/or more of the following options and then provide a more qualitative description.

- Most participants use computers, mobiles, internet etc. regularly
- Most participants do not use computers, mobiles, internet etc. regularly
- Participants are polarized between intensive and low ICT users
- Most participants usually use computers etc. only for recreational reasons with no specific purpose
- Most participants use computers etc. not only for general entertainment, but also with a specific purpose: media creation (blog, video…) , art creation (music, graphic, …) , computer programming …
- Most participants are aware about the potential of computers, media and internet
- Most participants are not aware about the potential of computers, media and internet
- Participants are divided between high and low awareness of ICT potential
- Most participants would like to use and learn more about computer programs, video etc.
- Most participants would not like to use and learn more about computer programs, video etc.
- Participants are divided about more ICT use/learning (some very keen, others not interested)

Qualitative observations:

Free text ⇒

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. Q 13-15

Learning elsewhere and learning differently: does it happen, could it happen?
Please summarize what is the prevailing student/young peoples' opinion with regards to traditional class-based education and alternative approaches.
First select one/or more of the following options and then provide a more qualitative description.

- Most participants think that they learn almost nothing outside the school
- Most participants think that they learn something outside the school
- Most participants think that they learn a lot outside the school
- Participants are divided about learning outside the school
- Participants have no idea about other ways of learning things
- Participants have a lot of ideas about other ways of learning things

Qualitative observations:
Free text ⇒

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. **Q 16-22**

Could this different perspective be brought into the school and how? Ideas, suggestions, desires...
Please summarize what is the prevailing student/young peoples' opinion with regards to non-traditional learning approaches, and the potential use of media.
Answers in this section are particularly difficult to summarize, except for the following three aspects. Please select one/or more of the following options and then provide a more qualitative description.

- Most participants are willing/interested to work more with computer, media etc.
- Most participants do not want to work more with computers, media etc.
- Participants are divided about working more with computers, media, etc.
- Most participants would like to use computers etc. also after school time
- Most participants would not like to use computers etc. also after school time
- Participants are divided about working more with computers etc. after school time
- Most participants would like to experiment learning without a teacher in school
- Most participants would not like to experiment learning without a teacher in school
- Participants are divided about experimenting learning without a teacher in school

Qualitative observations:
Free text ⇒

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. **Q 23-24**

Leading to post-meeting documentation

- Most participants do not want to use media to express their point of views
- Most participants want also to use media to express their point of views
- Some participants express their point of views better with media than in a group dialog.

Qualitative observations:
Free text ⇒

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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.
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You might also wish to study the Impact Evaluations of the Intel Computer Clubhouse Network on
www.computerclubhouse.org/content/our-impact-around-world
www.computerclubhouse.org/content/success-stories

21ˢᵗ century learning in action

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