

LABlearning FLASH 02 summer 2012

The LABlearning project is funded by the EU Commission's Lifelong Learning Program. It aims to re-motivate disengaged or disadvantaged youth through involving them in project and media based laboratories of learning, thereby offering useful guidance to interested institutions and teachers across Europe.

For contact: see project website

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?*

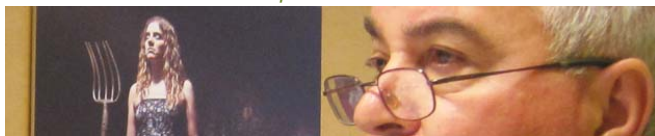
Perhaps many young people really *are* bored in the classrooms, but that's not the point. The media labs are not created to entertain the young people.

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 in the beginning, but the media projects must be so exciting, so *seducing*, that they will slowly start to engage themselves more and more in the project tasks. 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 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 based on strong game principles from good digital games. *Production, not consumption...*

Learn more about hard fun in media labs on www.lablearning.eu