

DIGITAL TEACHER TRAINING IN E-SPERIDi MOODLE

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COMUNICAZIONE

ARGOMENTO: - E-learning in E-SpeRiDi per la Formazione Docenti

Abstract

E-SpeRiDi Moodle has been hosting Teacher Training Courses since 2008. This paper is a report of a work in progress which has started in March 2016 in the platform for DigitalTeacher Training in Sicily www.animatoridigitalisicilia.it and continued with f2f lessons at Liceo Spedalieri in Catania in the months of May and June run by the author of this contribution to explore three modules: OER and Digital Storytelling, Mobile Learning and BYOD, Learning and Content Management System practice in E-SpeRiDi Moodle <http://www.forcoop.net> and eBook design in ScribaEpub <http://www.scribaepub.it/>. The participants have been asked to work out guidelines and teaching projects published in the shared eBook Library of Scribaepub as influencers and motivators in order to integrate digital learning paths and modules in The Three Year School Plan of their school (2016 - 2018) which is now to be concluded.

Keywords – LCMS, eBook design, OER, CLIL course design, TPACK competencies

1. E-SPERIDI MOODLE FOR THE PNSD

The new challenges for Digital Teacher Training in Italy, as stated in the National Digital School Plan, go beyond the digital tools expertise and aim mainly to manage those soft skills people need in schools to act for a digital innovation plan. The digital leader in her school is not only the one who demonstrates her own mastery but should act first as a motivator, then as a facilitator, a colleague who walks step by step with her colleagues and assists them while being a hard worker and a good goal setter at the same time.

The obstacles to overcome for a digital teacher trainer who has accepted to cope with the foretold challenges are the constraints of time, three hours of f2f lessons to thirty participants for each module, and the high risk of fragmentation in the feedback the digital teacher trainer can get from the participants belonging to nursery, primary or secondary schools.

This is the reason why a blended training course has been offered in E- SpeRiDi for the trainees to manage courses cooperatively in small groups (Salmon 2009) and work on a shared sample course for their school.

The experience is based on groups which construct knowledge for one another through collaboratively creating a design of blended courses with shared meanings and outcomes. The same procedure has been followed for generative eBook construction in ScribaEpub to be integrated in Moodle.

The two learning and management systems have offered the participants the opportunity to build a learning community of practice in which they can go on working also with their students and also when the digital teacher training course comes to an end.

1.1. OER and Digital Storytelling

This first module has been introduced through NLP techniques by working on a passage from chapter five of *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens in which the place where the novel is set, is being described.

NLP, which stands for NeuroLinguistic Programming, has been defined as the art and science of excellence and its techniques have been extensively used in education. The activities suggested to the trainees try to illustrate how some NLP patterns such as the representational systems can be exploited to improve involvement in multimedia production by starting from the best software at our disposal: our brain. Representational systems are the different mental operations through which we experience the world and represent it to ourselves (Revell, Norman 1997). We can represent it through the visual organs, the auditory, the kinaesthetic, the olfactory or gustative (VAGOK). Even though in everyday life we use all the five organs according to the situation we have to face and each of us tends to have a favourite representational system, in the activity described below, trainees are stimulated first to create a mental picture of the extract they have read, and then, gradually guided to adjust it, using their favourite representational system.

The aim is to make them build a picture which is unique and relevant to them by shifting from the mono-media written text to a rich multimedia representation. Through a series of questions trainees are guided to add details to the picture, to make it as much clear and alive as possible. Trainees do not have to answer the questions aloud but have to interiorise their answers. The questions aim at triggering off all the five organs, in order to give each trainee the opportunity to use his or her favourite one. Here are some of the questions: 'Is your picture colour or black and white? Is it blurred or focused? Is it dark or bright? Are there any sounds or noises? Are the sounds harsh or soft? Is your picture big or small? What shape does it have? Are you inside or outside the picture? In the following step trainees are guided to modify the elements they put in their picture, in order to get a real satisfactory image of them. These are some hints: 'If the picture is colour, make it B/W, blurred/focused, dark/bright and vice versa (Visual) Add/remove sounds. Make noises harsh/soft and vice versa (Auditory). Make your picture bigger/smaller. Change shape. Get in/out of the picture (Kinaesthetic).

Finally trainees are asked to actualise their picture using their favourite software: Movie Maker or iMovie, Garage Band or Audacity for sound management. They are also invited to apply Ken Burns effect. Anyway, the choice of the most complex software or the easiest is of no importance if compared with the creative process they have experienced with the best software at our disposal.

Two eBooks: *Storytelling* and *Storymaking* have been published in *ScribaEpub* Library for the trainees to share methodology with the trainer. Trainees can evaluate the eBooks and leave a comment to encourage a sort of social reading. The eBook about *Storymaking* has been published to help teachers in primary schools to plan activities with their children face to face before going on digital. The eBook about Digital Storytelling contains

some suggestions on how to foster creativity and practise lateral thinking (E. De Bono, 2009). The narrative approach has been followed to introduce the concept of crossmedia editing (M.Giovagnoli, 2010) and the contribution of Suggestopedia by explaining its technique through the Suggestopedic Elephant (Fletcher, 2002)

As far as the Open Educational Resources (OER) are concerned, the trainees have been invited to explore the contents of the first MOOC on Open Education by David Wiley (Wiley, 2007) and the proceedings published by Fini et al.

1. BYOD and LCMS

This second module has been designed for the participants to practise eBook construction from their tablets or smartphones using the platform www.scribaepub.it and integrate the eBooks in the E-SpeRiDi platform powered by Moodle. In E-SpeRiDi they work in three different groups as creators of the following courses: Storytelling Sicily, CLIL and Media Education Modules. The three courses to be implemented in E-SpeRiDi Moodle follow the SAMR model in order to focus on authentic assignments. The trainees explore why stories are a powerful way to lead, influence, and teach (Nick Owen, 2002). It is important to make them know the difference between data, argument and story and understand how stories make things real (Nick Owen 2004). In the Storytelling Sicily Course, the participants experienced how to connect with self, others, and a desirable future (Nick Owen 2009) to share stories of Sicilian heritage and culture. They have been trained to know how to structure and tell stories for Digital Storytelling and create a storytelling e-book in ScribaEpub. The participants who have chosen to work on Content and Language Integrated Learning Module, have been offered two ebooks: eCLIL 1 and 2 as a guide from lesson planning to lesson delivery and evaluation.

Figura 1 – A screenshot from the PNSD Course in E-SpeRiDi Moodle

Before analysing the rationale behind CLIL modules and the aims of CLIL, trainees have been introduced to the basics of the methodology. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) modules are based on 4Cs; BICS; CALP; HOTS and LOTS. The 4Cs are to be taken into consideration for a good balance of Content,

Communication, Cognition and Culture. The Content of curricular subjects is to be analysed for its language demands and presented in understandable way. The Communication part of the 4Cs consists mainly in the effort to increase the Student Talking Time (STT) and reduce the Teacher Talking Time (TTT).

A central Role is to be given to self evaluation and group feedback. Cognition involves the thinking skills of reasoning, creative thinking and evaluating. Culture means understanding ourselves and other cultures. A researcher in bilingual education, Jim Cummings, described BICS and CALP. BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills) are the skills needed for social, conversational situations. Tasks associated with BICS are often less cognitively demanding. According to Cummings and other researchers, it takes learners at least five years to achieve CALP, which is a level required for Academic school Study. Language used in subject Teaching is often abstract and formal and therefore it is cognitively demanding. Teacher need to recognise when learners should move from BICS towards CALP and provides support. Examples of the use of cognitively demanding Language are: justifying opinions, making hypotheses and interpreting evidence. CALP activities can be efficiently run the different forum types offered by Moodle. Trainees have created courses for primary and secondary school children.

The Media Education Module introduces the anti-discrimination video clip as a very specific per- suasion tool, which, in order to be efficient, adopts audio-visual rhetorics. The module starts by defining the methods of persuasion of the classical rhetoric as well as the main rhetoric figures in the light of the most recent semiotic theories and through some examples of messages used within certain social campaigns. There are activities in which trainees have to watch short videos with the aim of spotting the methods of persuasion and the rhetoric figures used in each clip. This screenshot from Moodle shows the main goals: to understand the persuasive and rhetoric function which characterises the video clip against discrimination and in the Language of Propaganda, to acquire knowledge of rhetoric figures in order to be able to recognise them in the chosen videos and then acquire the necessary knowledge to design video clips.

CONCLUSIONS

The training experience has shown how contents, technological and pedagogical knowledge have worked together to make trainees understand exactly where content knowledge meets pedagogical knowledge, how the technological knowledge relates to contents and how to use technology to support teaching. They are aware of the fact that Contents, Technology and Pedagogy work in a very complicated way, and act differently, to support good teaching in the specific learning context of primary or higher education.

Each module has been introduced at different levels. For instance, two eBooks have been produced in ScribaEpub, Storytelling (higher education) and StoryMaking (primary education) (Pirruccello 2016) on how to evaluate a Digital Storytelling, which tools to choose, how to use OER according to the rubric of Seven Elements, in order to let trainees produce their own Digital Storytelling in ScribaEpub. The eBook on Storytelling has got 1590 views up to now. It offers suggestions on Crossmedia production and introduces Lozanov Suggestopedia through the Story of the Suggestopedic Elephant. An eBook on CLIL lesson planning and delivery has been published to guide trainees in their CLIL course design for primary and secondary level. The same procedure has been followed for the eBook on the basics of Moodle for Animatori Digitali: <http://www.scribaepub.it/reader/play/7118-moodle-per-ad-creatori-di-corso.html>

The participants have been given a check list for the peer evaluation of model courses in Moodle and the eBooks they have produced in scribaEpub. They have been given opportunities to practice individual and collaborative intelligence. The activity of representing knowledge has been fostered with the contribution of NLP techniques and has included contribution to jointly created works. The metacognitive process including disciplinary thinking and collaborative intelligence has allowed a structured feedback on the productive diversity in learning with eBooks (Rotta et al 2010).

Conclusions are going to be drawn by the end of this year, however something positive can be told on the attitudes of the trainees to act as motivators, facilitators and school leaders.

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