

Social learning in Learning Networks through peer support: research findings and pitfalls

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Social learning in Learning Networks through peer support

Research findings and pitfalls

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Networked Learning Conference, 2-4 April 2012

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Introduction

- Introduction
 - Who are we?
- What are learning networks?
- Why peer support?
- Some results
- Your feedback

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Who are we?

- CELSTEC: Centre for Learning Sciences and Technologies
- Learning Networks Research and Development programme
- Report on studies by Peter van Rosmalen, Gijs de Bakker, Sibren Fetter, Amy Hsiao, many others

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Learning Networks

- Online networks
- Social networks of people
- People connected through network and interactions
- Learn from and with each other



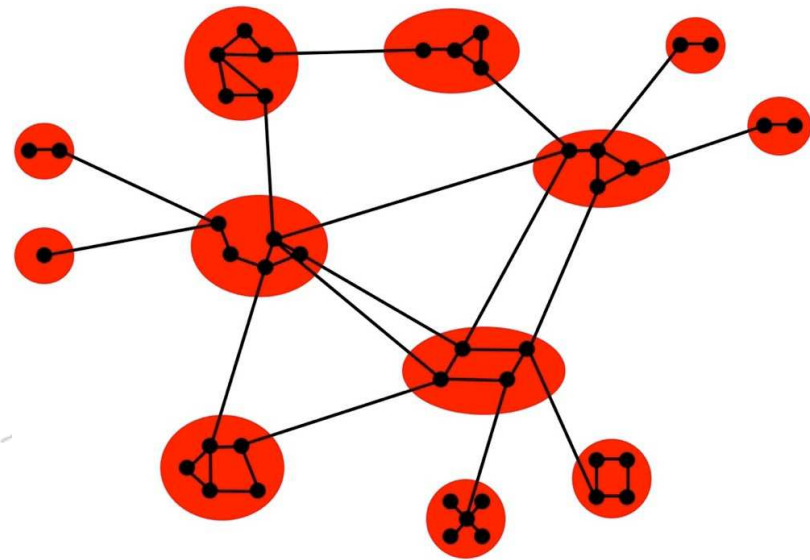
Social learning through peer support

- People learn from and with each other: knowledge sharing and construction
- Requires social interactions
- Need to provide support to enable and maintain successful interactions



Ad hoc transient groups

- Ad hoc transient groups
- Learner support
- Network support



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Peer support model

Pre-condition A Learning Network with learning material, and a set of users with profiles

Main steps

1. Anne poses a question.
2. The system determines
 - Learning progress.
 - Most suitable peers.
3. System sets up a collaboration area with question and guidelines.
4. Selected peers get an invitation to assist.
5. Anne and the peers discuss and formulate an answer
6. Anne closes the question and rates the answer

Post-condition Answer is stored



Peer matching criteria

- Context
- Type of question
- Objective
- Available user profile data



Two examples learner support

- ASA: A tutor locator
 - Non-formal learning network
 - Content related questions
- SAPS: Synchronous Allocated Peer Support
 - Higher education and non-formal learning network
 - Course related questions



Example sense of community

- TeLLNet: Ask a question
 - International community of teachers
 - Questions related to TeLLNet, projects and subjects

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Results

- Positive results
- ASA and SAPS
 - Questions satisfactorily answered
 - More questions in shorter time span when selecting based on criteria
- TeLLNet
 - Helped teachers to get into contact with each other



Cognitive load

- Mental effort and processing involved in performing task
- Reduce inefficient aspects to optimise performance
- Learning network without social support induces too much unwanted cognitive load



Two studies

- Non-formal learning network
- Peer tutoring

- Psychology curriculum
- Working in pairs

The logo features a stylized red mouse cursor arrow pointing upwards, with a white outline. A thin grey line curves around the arrow, starting from the left, looping over the top, and ending on the right. The text 'CELSTEC' is positioned above 'celstec.org' in a sans-serif font.

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Results

- Large drop out
- Few usable data cognitive load
- Very few questions asked



Summary

- Peer support in Learning Network required for knowledge sharing and construction.
- Ad hoc transient group likely peer support model.
- How to select peers depends on context.
- Better results when selecting on criteria than random.
- Difficult to run experiments in Learning Networks context: no controlled situation; can't single out aspects.
- Difficult to apply theories and approaches from established instructional design and learning domain.
- Holistic approach necessary.



Further information

- francis.brouns@ou.nl
- ASA: Peter van Rosmalen
- SAPS: Gijs de bakker
- TeLLNet: Sibren Fetter
- Cognitive load: Amy Hsiao
- For publications, check our repository at <http://dspace.ou.nl>
- More information about CELSTEC at <http://celstec.org>
- More information about Learning in Learning Networks at <http://openu.nl/web/topic-leren-in-netwerken>

