

Networking to Learn & Learning to Network: Skills, Values and Technology

Citation for published version (APA):

Rajagopal, K., & Costa, C. (2011). Networking to Learn & Learning to Network: Skills, Values and Technology. In *Proceedings of The PLE Conference 2011*

Document status and date:

Published: 01/07/2011

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Please check the document version of this publication:

- A submitted manuscript is the version of the article upon submission and before peer-review. There can be important differences between the submitted version and the official published version of record. People interested in the research are advised to contact the author for the final version of the publication, or visit the DOI to the publisher's website.
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Abstract

In networked learning, other people are a valuable part of the learner's progress. To perform well in networked learning, learners need to be able to identify their own (learning) needs and identify the people who can help them with their learning. This entails that they also need to be able to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses, but also that of others.

Networking is essential to succeed in this learning environment. It revolves around a complex skill of the learner to (i) recognize and identify the other's qualities and to (ii) make (valuable) associations of these qualities with the learner's own needs. This skill could take place at the moment of interacting with someone or even in that person's absence.

In recent years, technology has also played a big role in enhancing networked learning by supporting connections and interactions between people. However, does technology also encourage the development of the networking skill? Do people network better by using technology?

In this workshop, participants will discuss networking and the role of technology in developing these skills.

Goal: The goal of this workshop is to open participants' minds to understanding their own networking practice and behaviour, and the skills underlying it. The participants will be invited to brainstorm about what makes this skill unique, how individual networking practice and behaviour can be improved and how others can be guided and taught how to network.

Target participants: practitioners, lifelong learners, teachers, researchers

Format:

Introduction (2')

The room is set up to accommodate group discussions. Groups of 5-6 people are made.

Activity 1: Observe own networking practice and behaviour (individual activity) (20')

- Write down 5 people in your personal network who you learn from
- Meet the others at our table
- Introduce the people in the table to at least one person from your network
- Write down the reasons for your choice (per reason; 1 post-it)

Activity 2: Reflect on networking behaviour (group activity) (20')

- Cluster reasons
- Name the clusters into factors
- Think about which factors come out of strong ties, weak ties, very weak ties relationships

Break: move to other tables, form other groups (10')

Activity 3: Learning Café on three topics/statements (30')

Participants are divided into three groups, to discuss one of the three topics below. One reporter is selected for each topic.

The suggested topics are:

- “Different technologies develop different aspects of the networking skills”
- “You cannot teach networking behaviour: it is nature, not nurture”
- “People who use technology network differently”

Each group discusses a topic for 10', before moving on to the next table.

The reporters shortly summarize the main points of the discussion on each topic in a final round-up in plenum. (10')

The reporters will be asked to make a short write-up on the outcomes of the discussions, to be posted on a dedicated forum on <http://www.TELEurope.eu>.

Closing words (5')