



ASL – Adult Self-Learning: Supporting Autonomy in a Technology-Mediated Environment

Adult Collaborative learning

INBIE desk research report

IO1: Definition of an operative model for teaching – learning low qualified adults in an online environment

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Executive Summary

The desk research “Adults to engage in Education activities” was developed by Research and Innovation in Education Institute staff within the project Adult Self-Learning: Supporting Autonomy in a Technology-Mediated Environment (Acronym: ASL) . [ASL project, Application form, p. 74].)

This study has shown that engagement by adult learners can be enhanced by collaborative e-learning platforms where learners can share their experiences and findings. Preparing the adult learners to collaborate online is a primary importance in the efficacy on a collaborative writing project. Tutors should be introduced with the new application of online platforms to be able to work efficiently with an adult learners group.

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1. Introduction

Under the term adult education we understand all non-formal, informal and formal education processes, which are an extension or supplementation of education acquired at school, but also broadly understood practical education, thanks to which adults are able to develop their skills, acquire knowledge, improve professional qualifications or also acquiring new skills and enriching personal life, as well as the possibility of taking an active part in the economic, social and cultural development





of societies. This definition is consistent with the adopted at the Nineteenth General UNESCO Conference held in Nairobi¹.

In 2018, the European Commission created a catalogue of new competences, according to which the society of the future will require preparation in the field of understanding and creating information, in the field of multilingualism, mathematical competence and in the field of natural sciences, technology and engineering. Will expect digital, personal, social and learning competences, civic, entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression²

Lifelong learning, all cognitive and socio-cultural activity of adults must be a component of public policy, defining the potential of human capital, confirming recognition of education and culture in labour market policy, social cohesion and justice policy, civic activity and in recognition and respect for cultural identity³.

The globalization process and its consequences also reach adult education, both its theoretical and conceptual layer and the area of teaching practice. One should also consider whether globalization has an impact on adult development processes.

The main goal of education policy is to equalize the educational differences of people at various stages of their development, with particular emphasis on people and communities affected by social marginalization and poverty. For 2019/2020, the Minister of National Education has designated as basic activities and directions of education policy in Poland: prevention of addiction, education to values, development of digital, mathematical competences, creativity and entrepreneurship, as well as implementation of the core curricula for education in vocational education professions⁴.

2. Adult education in Poland - trainer competences and impact on adults

Unfortunately, adult education is not included in the Polish educational policy system today, but it is part of the free market services sector. Adult education is defined as a hard to measure and descriptive category of cognitive and socio-cultural activity of adult learners. Lifelong learning is a similarly undefined area. it is open-

¹ https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/fundamental-principles-and-national-policies-56_pl_z dnia 20.04.2020

² Council of Europe Recommendation of 22 May 2018

³ See: Council of Europe Recommendation of 22 May 2018

⁴ <https://www.gov.pl/web/edukacja/kierunki-polityki-oswiatowej-panstwa-na-rok-szkolny-2019-2020>
Retrieved 10.05.2020.





bound learning that allows guiding new research exploration pathways and has many owners⁵.

Because of this dispersion, adult education is a difficult to analyze area that consists of teaching:

- Formal,
- Non formal,
- informal.

When analysing the adult education sector, the concept of 'learners', 'teachers' and 'schools' should be defined. I accept the following classification of these issues; semantic fields of the terms Learners - Schools - Adult teachers⁶:

- **Learners** - adept, addressee, apprentice, reader, member, debtor, hospitalized, instructed, correspondent, student, observer, recipient, panellist, apprentice, traveller, meeting person, consultant, self-educator, seminarian, listener, intern, student, terminator, student, participant, user, viewer, visitor...
- **Educators** - animator, author, librarian, coach, advisor, didactic, educator, expert, facilitator, hesitant, instructor, consultant, curator, lector, manager, mentor, master, speaker, guardian, orator, educator, populariser, speaker, guide, clerk, trainer, trainer, tutor, inspector, educator, lecturer...
- **schools** - academy, broadcast, library, educational blog, coaching, reading room, debate, home, community centre, gallery, institute, event, cinema, club, circle, conference, conservatory, course, media, mentoring, museum, cultural centre, cultural and cultural institution educational, e-learning platform, counselling, website, seminar, community, internship, study, symposium, trade fair, tutoring, learning organization, college, university, study visit, exhibition...

Education can be defined as follows⁷:

- Formal (institutionalized) education - early school and school education (corresponds to the Ministry of National Education) and formal education of full-time students during university studies (corresponds to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education). It is a process leading to obtaining diplomas, certificates or attestations.
- Non-formal education - a lifelong process of shaping attitudes, values, skills and knowledge based on various experiences and the impact of the

⁵ Muszyński M., (2014), Education and learning - around concepts, "Andragogical Yearbook", 21.

⁶ Szarota Z., Tasks and social functions of adult education in the perspective of learning in adulthood, Social Pedagogy, nr 2(72) 2019; <http://pedagogikaspoleczna.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/PS22019-117-132.pdf>

⁷ Okoń W., (1998), New pedagogical dictionary, Warsaw, Academic Publisher „Żak”, p. 84. ISBN 83-86770-96-1. Oraz Jankowski D., (2007), Edukacja wobec zmiany, Wydawnictwo: Adam Marszałek, s. 10. ISBN 83-7322-845-4.





educational environment (peer group, family, social environment, business activity) and the impact of mass media. An example are, among others educational competitions, projects, films, radio plays, multimedia and simulation games, as well as entertainment education.

- Informal Education - not leading to a certificate or diploma, is present in the workplace or in the activity of civil society organizations (eg. Non-governmental organizations, youth, sports clubs)
- Self-education - a form of enriching your knowledge when the current education does not meet the expectations of the individual or when it has already been completed as a result of formal education ⁸.
- Accidental education (ad hoc) - resulting from everyday situations that happened unexpectedly and were not planned but were a source of knowledge or experience.

It is necessary to distinguish between concepts of education and learning.

- Education concerns a process that "is to lead to achieving the intended effects"⁹,
- learning is treated as incidental, unplanned, situational, in everyday life ¹⁰.

The following adult education institutions in Poland can be mentioned¹¹:

- Elementary schools for adults
- Junior high schools for adults
- Upper secondary schools for adults
- General secondary schools for adults
- Post-secondary schools for adults
- Public institutions providing lifelong learning for adults
- Training institutions
- Training institutions offering training for the unemployed and job seekers
- Other training institutions
- Higher education
- Post-graduate and specialist education students
- Open and third-age universities

There is a slight increase in the percentage of people participating in adult education. Only 7.6% of adults in Poland did not qualify at upper secondary level (EU average: 21.9%). The percentage of employed low-qualified adults is 43.1% (EU average: 56.8%). In 2018, however, only 5.7% of adults aged 25-64 had any educational experience in the last 4 weeks (EU average: 11.1%), a slight increase compared to 4%

⁸ Self-education in practice, or where to get knowledge? Michalpasterski.pl. [retrieved 10.04.2020.

⁹ Muszyński M., (2014), Education and learning - around concepts, "Anagogical Yearbook", 21. s. 86

¹⁰ Solarczyk-Szwec H., (2011), Life-long learning: an old paradigm in a new layout? "Studies in the Theory of Education", 2/2(3), s. 257–266

¹¹ <http://reformaedukacji.men.gov.pl/> Retrieved 10.05.2020.





in 2017 In 2017, approximately 16,000 adults over 25 years of age have obtained upper secondary qualifications.

Only a small percentage of almost 1.5 million people aged 25-64 with low levels of education (including nearly one million people aged 45-64) participate in adult education. In January 2019, the government adopted the general part of the Integrated Skills Strategy, and the implementation plan will be developed based on cooperation with the OECD.

Work on the implementation of the national qualifications framework is progressing: additional qualifications have been included in the register and institutions responsible for validation and certification have been selected, but this process is at risk of delays. There is an improvement in policy coordination at national level (the Act on the Integrated Qualifications System is implemented in cooperation with various ministries and sectoral skills councils), but not at regional level.

In 2019, Poland received a country-specific recommendation from the EU Council, which recommends "supporting high-quality education and skills that meet the needs of the labour market, especially through adult education" (EU Council, 2019).

3. Collaborative learning experience

Our teaching and learning environment has changed since Internet became accessible to everybody with a mobile devices that can be connected to the web. It is no longer sufficient to use face to face methods to deliver knowledge, it is necessary to used online collaborative learning or better a collaborative blended learning environment¹².

Collaboration is a key component in the provision for the creation of "effective learning environments", as it gives learners an opportunity to discuss, argue, negotiate, and reflect on the current beliefs and knowledge and what is more important, enable the exchange of good practices and experiences (Marzano; Ochoa-Siguencia, 2017). The learner becomes engaged in building knowledge in the process of discussion and interaction with experts and other classmates.

Collaboration and cooperation is working together to achieve common goals. Through collaborative actions, the individuals are trying to get results beneficial both for themselves and for other group members. Collaborative learning, no doing any differences like: online – offline collaborative learning, online - offline collaborative

¹² Ochoa Siguencia, Luis & Herman, Damian & Marzano, Gilberto. (2015). Creating effective online collaborative learning groups at higher education institutions





writing tools – blended collaborative learning but only as a learning based on collaboration is the usage of small groups for training purposes so that the learners work together to achieve the best possible learning outcomes¹³.

Collaborative learning promote engagement. A further division was noted between less verbally confident learners, and those who, although in a lower level, were able to communicate confidently. In classes for learners of high language ability, when tutors intervened to give the shyer students the chance to be ‘scribes’ in class, they became more participatory not just in transcribing others’ thoughts, but also in adding their own. Tutors reported that it was essential that groups were monitored closely to ensure members discussed and took notes effectively together from the beginning¹⁴.

In many studies appear that all levels of students conveyed satisfaction with receiving regular feedback throughout the collaborative writing process both online and in the classroom¹⁵. Owing to their online presence, tutors reported responding to emails from students via the e-learning platform, adding comments to Pbworks during the process, as well as the usual informal feedback in class and formalised version on submission of formative assessment tasks. Some learners commented that this was a change from other face to face courses, where feedback was often sought out, or largely received after summative assessments. The availability of tutors online and a ‘friendly approach’ was reported as being as important as formalised feedback structures.

In online collaborative learning situations, there is a positive correlation between reaching the goals by the learners and their personal satisfaction. They realize that they achieve their educational goals only if the other learners from their group will also reach their educational goals. For instance, the success of the team member to create the webpage using Pbworks, making a multimedia presentation available in Internet through Slideshare or Slideboom, taking care about the project management through Dotproject or Blue Ant, depends both on their personal efforts and the efforts of other team members, who bring the necessary knowledge, skills and resources¹⁶.

¹³ Ochoa-Siguencia, L. Marzano, G., Kaczmarczyk, P. (2017). Online work-space-shared management to support collaborative learning, Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference “Challenges for high quality of adult education (Riga 30 May 2017), 135-141

¹⁴ Ibidem

¹⁵ Ibidem

¹⁶ Ochoa Siguencia, Luis & Gómez-Ullate, Martin & Herman, Damian. (2015). Use of online collaborative writing tools by students of higher education. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340388654> (retrieved 10.05.2020).





The results of a survey done by INBIE (Ochoa Siguencia, Gomez-Ullate, Herman, 2015) shown that most of the learners agree that collaborative learning is one of the best ways to use a group working in some tasks or creating content¹⁷:

- It was easy to use the tool in the group work
- It was effective to use the tool in the group work
- The tool was easier to use than traditional tools such as MS Word
- I liked to comment and edit others contributions to the group work
- I liked that other students comment and edit my own work in the group
- The quality of collaboration in the group increased with the use of the tool
- The tool motivated me to collaborate with the students in the group
- It was instructive to edit and comment others contributions to the group work
- The tool did work as expected

4. SWOT analysis: Barriers and opportunities

The adult education market in Poland can be analysed like any other, using the SWOT analysis tool.

Strengths

- The strengths of adult education in Poland can certainly be counted
- many years of experience,
- flexibility in adapting to the environment and self-development of educators,
- access to internet and equipment for both educators and students
- more and more social campaigns informing about the possibility of retraining and further training of adults

Weaknesses

- an area that should be developed is certainly a wider proportion of the offer
- insufficient access to e-learning platforms or online meetings (expensive access to platforms, non-intuitive service, most platforms in English)
- adults with low earnings and qualifications may not be ready to start learning online - which education can give people in different locations access to knowledge and workshops without forcing them to leave home
- not all educators want to develop and educate - to master the use of all modern methods and tools supporting education

¹⁷ Ochoa Siguencia, Luis & Gómez-Ullate, Martin & Herman, Damian. (2015). Use of online collaborative writing tools by students of higher education. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340388654> (retrieved 10.05.2020).





Opportunities

- globalization
- technological progress
- many EU-funded programs for adult education
- increasingly popular universities of the third century - giving seniors the opportunity to study and maintain social contacts

Inherent features of globalization include, among others:

- shrinking time and space,
- creating global economic, trade and financial markets,
- the creation of supranational political and military structures,
- simplification of mass culture,
- integration of formerly divided countries,
- progress in the rapid provision and exchange of information on a scale
- worldwide.

Threats

- globalization
- unwillingness of adults to expand knowledge
- benefits paid by the State to unemployed persons
- low motivation to take up education

Globalization also has many negative and even socially destructive consequences, such as:

- social stratification
- marginalization of groups and regions,
- concentrations of wealth and mass exclusion.

Globalization means the inevitable fate of the world, as well as the inevitable process that affects each of us. Currently, in the age of the coronavirus epidemic - we are more strongly perceived by the opportunities offered by e-learning, the use of individual platforms for knowledge exchange as well as conducting online training. Globalization is an interdisciplinary issue combining economics, politics, education and culture. It should be assumed that globalization covers all areas of human life, in particular scientific and technical progress, demographic conditions, health, culture and education. In the area of broadly understood exclusions, it should be noted that globalization reduces the sense of isolation that occurs in many developing countries, and provides its residents with access to a variety of knowledge. As a result of globalization, many people today live longer and their standard of living is much higher.

The use of the latest technologies affects the ease of communication and the speed of communication of people over long distances, which reduces the barriers in the current world. Globalization has many positive features, but also carries a lot of





threats. A well-adapted and educated society can take advantage of the benefits of globalization and counteract its bad consequences.

The volatility of the modern world requires individuals and wider social organisms to adapt flexibly to changes taking place. Their pace is a challenge even for well-educated people who belong to the social or employee elite. Therefore, (auto) educational investments are necessary to enable free functioning in the surrounding reality. The more so that the key competences for adults are not high.¹⁸

5. Conclusion

Collaborative learning and the use of wiki writing tasks for adult learners working in e-learning environment has a great opportunity in times like this one we are passing. The Pandemic virus COVID-19 has changed the reality of learning in classes and in groups. Most of adult organizations for first time started to use collaborative learning applications and platforms that involve learners and tutors in the same virtual environment. Learners and tutors had to change their teaching methodology to a more open and collaborative learning practice.

Preparing the learners to collaborate online is one of the most important tasks and has a huge importance in the efficacy of the learners or group writing projects. Tutors provided the courses adapted to the new situation, using a wiki, Microsoft Teams and in group writing tasks. Both tutors and learners reported that this preparation helped to level the playing field for learners who knew more or less about wikis, and allayed technological apprehensions.

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