Considerations about E-Learning Tools for Adult Education

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Abstract

The aim of the scientific approach is to emphasize the role and importance of using e-learning tools in adults’ education and development. The research and papers published in recent years reveal that adults develop their skills and abilities after starting training and continuous improvement programs. Companies have responded to these needs and e-learning tools were created with a friendly interface, which are accessible to different categories of users. In this article we present the main results obtained using the Glogster EDU educational platform positioned in one of the first places in the international rankings. Glogster EDU means enthusiasm for teaching and learning, with an award-winning platform and encourages curiosity and creative problem solving for any project. Glogster EDU excites, motivates and creates a tangible partnership between school and home, safely and easily.

Keywords: Adult Education; development; e-learning; creativity; Glogster EDU

1. Introduction

European countries face a variety of challenges in what concerns increasing the educational knowledge level of the adult population. Permanent learning has occupied an important position in European policies in the field of education and training in the last years, and adult education is considered an opportunity for any country. Adult education insures their individual personal development and allows them to become involved in insuring social and economic progress. Developed either in the public or in the private environment, any adult education and training triggers significant employment opportunities, better quality jobs, enhanced competitiveness and social inclusion.

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As a result of the major explosion of Internet, educational technologies have widely developed and users fully benefit, according to their expectations, from the improvement of the educational process. Educational and formal training programs are ever more adapted to the students’ needs, and the instruments used can be accompanied by a wide variety of education related services, by an extended flexibility of the learning directions, a higher complexity of the trainers’ role or by an improvement of teamwork. The adults’ participation in permanent education implies for a series of activities to be performed as computer reproduced or simulated representations, supported by various animation methods and techniques, sounds, colors, and graphics. The adults will acquire competence and experience, as well as new knowledge in the activity fields where an interconnection is built between the physical reality and virtual reality. One of the instruments that developed in Romania is the e-learning platform. In what follows, we will present the Glogster EDU educational platform.

2. Modern Educational Technologies

Modern technologies utilized in adults’ educational process have the chance to develop a specific learning field. They define committed users, elaborate new studying methods or combine particular working instruments which shape the experience that cannot be reached in simple use only. These technologies mustn’t be seen as plain virtual communication approaches; they presume an involvement that transforms the strategies of developing and learning which, for each adult, is based on its own perception of self-improvement.

How adults are encouraged to participate in utilizing educational technologies is influenced mainly by their teachers. In their works, Hooper and Rieber (1999) described five phases of teachers’ use of technology: familiarization, utilization, integration, reorientation and evolution. Educational technologies can be interpreted as applications that take place both aided by technological skills and educative expertise of instructors. Only in this manner they can improve the involvement of new technologies in the educational system and they can ease the process of harmonization of necessary knowledge.

Thus both students and teachers benefit from educational technology by using instruments, processes, documents and hardware substructures, manipulating them in education focused communication. Today, there is a varied educational context which includes technical resources and devices that will enhance the learning process. Different applications, new techniques of documentation and storage of information contribute to processing and disseminating visual, IT and TV information.

Modern educational technologies allow fascinating methods of resource mobilization to be discovered. They must be integrated in specific combinations of human resources and materials as to generate comparisons between results almost identical to the proposed objectives, in a developing educational system. The favorable outcome of exploiting these technologies in education consists in searching for the best resources available.

Technology has always had an important impact on education, making possible both a better communication and the implementation of the newest information systems, useful for learning and tuition.

Promoting and implementing new technologies in education is materialized through reaching objectives followed by instructors, such as: encouraging the use of modern concepts in primary and advanced education, encouraging a healthy working environment and team work, creating developing programs attractive to adults, allowing them continuous shaping throughout their lives. Working with digital materials, e-learning, hands-on education, on demand, personalized tuition are new forms of education designed to adults today by using technology.

We aim, in this article, to introduce the Glogster EDU Educational Platform, which fulfils all characteristics of a modern education, providing a sense of accomplishment in the fields of teaching and gaining knowledge in a society dominated by globalization.

3. The Glogster EDU Educational Platform

Glogster was launched in December 2007 and EDU Glogster in October 2009. Since its foundation, Glogster has experienced fast growth and now has users in over 200 countries in the world. Although this portal addresses young people first of all, many users are aged over 25. At present, there are over 2.8 million glogs on the Web site. Glogster took birth out of the idea of classical paper posters and of the pop poster culture promoted by the young. The objective was to allow people to transform ideas into something that allows freedom for self-expression. The growing popularity of Glogster lead to the creation of Glogster EDU to help teachers in providing dynamic and
interactive teaching experiences. The Glogster EDU platform is meant for students and teachers in pre-university education.

Glogster EDU is a type of learning of the management system. Teachers can create projects with their students, in partnership with teachers and students in other schools. Moreover, Glogs can be developed for various disciplines: mathematics, physics, or economic sciences. During the lessons, the teachers verify and evaluate the students’ work. The platform is secure, as the students’ projects can be accessed only by a teacher who can fully supervise their activity. After the evaluation, the teacher decides which Glogs can be published and thus an online encyclopedia can be created, with digital educational content.

Glogster EDU is the global-leading educational platform for the creative expression of knowledge and competences, providing a fun, imaginative, and impactful learning experience, which encourages independent creative expression, the development of positive teacher-student relationships, as well as teamwork within collaboration projects. Students are attracted into a world where they can express their originality and knowledge, using the languages that most appeal to them: Multimedia and Web. Teachers encourage students to create GLOGS, multimedia posters (containing text, photographs, video clips, graphics, sounds, drawings, etc).

Glogster EDU is at present used by 1 million teachers, 10 million students in 100 counties and 1000 schools in the whole world. In 2013, the Glogster EDU development team improved the Glogster EDU 2.0 educational platform, with the basic mission of educating the students who use this platform with respect to the benefits of the Internet and of multimedia applications.

Glogster EDU has developed 3 students and products: EDU Elementary (30 students and 1 teacher) – 39 $ /year, EDU Secondary (125 students and 1 teacher) – 95 $ / year, and EDU Faculty (250 students and 10 teachers) – 390 $/year. The essential difference comes from the number of students, from the management of students, projects, the class, and from a series of additional functions (Glog drawing, the possibility to upload data onto the Glog or the possibility to use Glogster EDU media Premium – Glogs galleries). Glogster EDU has developed partnerships with Intel, Edmodo, Wikispaces, TeacherTube, Tinypic, and other social media networks. The Glogster platform is mainly funded from private sources. Occasionally, Glogster cooperates with well-known brands for the competitions organized for the users.

4. Results and discussions

Considering the multitude of opportunities provided by the Internet, young people should be willing and concerned with promoting and implementing projects that would develop the competitive competences required by an open society: entrepreneurship, creativity, the ability to make decisions.

In education, both traditional and modern methods should be used in teaching, learning, and evaluation, since they encourage the young to learn actively, to think critically, and to work in cooperation. We should underline that critical thinking does not mean negative and destructive thinking, but arguing whatever is defended on an issue, finding new arguments for the things that are not accepted, making others doubt of certain theories, and prompting them to find new solutions. Learning in cooperation develops teamwork, trains the mind, and generates competition among the students.

Intel specialists recommend:

- Using this technology in the didactic activity in order to promote the competences necessary for the 21st century.
- Identifying the educational instruments for teachers and students with the purpose of using technology to trigger learning through research, communication, collaboration, etc.
- Providing hands-made learning and creating curricular unity and an evaluation compliant with national and international standards.
- Facilitating student-centered methods that encourage them towards self-direction and superior thinking.
- Collaboration between students in order to improve the problem-solving method and encouraging students to participate in the evaluation and self-evaluation process.

Glogster EDU is a modern teaching – learning – evaluation method that complies with Bloom’s Taxonomy. The 6 stages specific to this taxonomy are: knowledge (of the terminology, of specific facts, of the means that allow
using specific data, of conventions, tendencies, and sequences, classifications and data, criteria, methods, abstract representations, principles and laws, theories); comprehension (transposition, interpretation, extrapolation); application; analysis (searching for elements, relations, organisation principles); synthesis (creation of a personal work, drawing an action plan, deriving abstract relations); valuation (internal criticism, external criticism).

The features of the Glogster EDU educational platform are:

- Students can create online interactive posters (glogs);
- The projects promote collaboration between students;
- The work environment is secure and private;
- The students are involved in fun and creative activities;
- The Glogster EDU method is compliant with national and international educational standards;
- The teacher has effective control over the students’ portfolios.

The presentation of the Glogster EDU method can be accessed at the address (http://edu.glogster.com/).

In order to create a glog using Glogster EDU on a certain topic, irrespective of the discipline, the students must know notions specific to that discipline. They must interpret the information transposed in the interactive poster created. The students apply and analyze the interdependence relationships presented in the glog created according to the topic. The results they obtain can be synthesized in a wiki. Glogs are evaluated through: internal criticism (self-evaluation, peer and teacher evaluation) and external criticism (evaluation by students and teachers in other classes, or by other visitors of the wiki). This method is used since October 2010, and on September 5, 2012 the Glogster EDU Ambassador Certificate was issued, as an acknowledgement for creativity and innovation in education. At the link address http://edu.glogster.com/ambassadors/ can be consulted the trainer’s Glogster Ambassador Certificate.

A wiki was created for the Glogster EDU Ambassador (http://glogstereduromania.wikispaces.com/), as well as a Facebook group, in order to promote the method of the future in education for Romanian teachers and students. We consider that the Glogster EDU platform is the best of the best educational instruments.

Fig. 1. Sequence in the Glogster EDU Ambassador’s Dashboard (http://loryrous.edu.glogster.com/dashboard)
The Facebook group – Glogster EDU Romania (https://www.facebook.com/groups/435134519858371/) comprises at the moment 137 members (the Glogster EDU team, made up of Romanian and foreign teachers). The group proves its purpose of creating a community of the Glogster EDU users in Romania.

The Glogster EDU method was promoted internationally on September 29, 2012, within the TeachMeet Int'l online meeting (http://teachmeetinternational.org/teachmeet-int-l/teachmeetint-l-3/presenters-tm-3?layout=blog), where the advantages of using this educational platform were presented to European teachers. At present, an Ambassador Glogster EDU account is used for 200 students. The students who use Glogster EDU are aged between 16 and 19. The Glogster EDU method is employed by students in order to promote the offers they develop within exercise firms in the virtual environment.

With the help of the Glogster EDU educational platform, 3D presentations can also be made, which can then be promoted on other social networks.

The Glogster EDU method is the future in education, and a change in the educational activity should encourage the students to be creative and innovative.

In Fig. no. 2, there are mentioned multiple possibilities offered by a developing program provided by Glogster EDU.

![Fig. 2. Diversity of the training opportunities offered by Platform Glogster EDU](image-url)

The Glogster EDU Platform brings together a variety of methods that can be individually selected, according to each user’s developing necessities.

Glogster EDU Platform’s users have permanent occasions of involvement in education processes, being active participants of learning development through collaboration, creativity and innovation. They will be able to express their opinions, ideas and any message linked to their learning activities, they can engage in team work, role play, game simulations, they can bring constructive criticism, promote activities, interests and different educational materials.

We can speak of efficiency about utilizing modern educational technologies if we take into consideration each instructor’s methodology when integrating them into a didactic activity. This platform is addressed mainly to individual teachers but also training companies or any user who wishes to sign up and benefit from an interactive and distinguished experience, according to their own interests.
5. Conclusions

The usage of the Glogster EDU educational platform develops the competences necessary in the 21st century: communication skills; creativity and intellectual curiosity; critical and systematized thinking; information and media skills; collaborative and interpersonal skills; problem identification, formulation, and solving; social responsibility. At the same time, we can mention extraordinarily high enthusiasm generated by the ever more widespread usage of educational technologies. Future directions in using adult educational instruments focus on improving the educational process, aiming at enhancing creativity, the competences and knowledge acquired by various categories of persons.

“Glogster EDU LOVES and appreciates our Romanian users, and our ultimate goal is to bring creative learning to every school in the world. Help us by joining the charge, and implement 2.0 technology in your curriculum.” - Co-Founder Glogster EDU, Patrik Prepsl.

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