A networked learning experience for starting HE students

starter professional practice research

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Life context

• more 78.2% of Maltese households have broadband Internet access at home
• Over 75% of Maltese youths (aged 11-19) use the social networking website Facebook

Formal Learning context

• Traditional lecture reigns uncontested

MODULE WITHIN COURSE
Networked Learning Experience
In a series of three research studies ...

Students’ use of networked technologies for living and for learning
QUANTITATIVE STUDY

- Case study approach
  - Pre-course survey questions
  - Observation
    - Online activity logs
    - Observations of immersed participant researcher
Home Internet accessibility: **100%**

Two-three hours spend online per day: **85.3%**
Technology use ... For living

- WWW: 94%
- Social Networking: 62.3%
- Net-play: 37.0%
- Media-sharing: 43.3%
- Peer-to-Peer: 39.6%
- Email: 92.7%
- Synchronous chat: 81.8%
- Asynchronous chat: 40.8%
- Blogs: 13.2%
- Wikis: 9.4%
- WWW for information search: 92.7%
- Email: 81.8%
- Wiki: 41.8%
### Use of learning materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Count (Percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Description</td>
<td>42 (60.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Guide Notes</td>
<td>23 (33.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course-notes</td>
<td>42 (60.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-sheets</td>
<td>38 (55.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Activity</td>
<td>Number of participating students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forum (SU0) “Study Strategies” (R)</td>
<td>5 (7.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiki (SU1) “Computer Peripherals”</td>
<td>12 (17.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forum (SU2) “Categorising software” (K)</td>
<td>14 (20.3%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wiki (SU3) “Language Translators”</td>
<td>12 (17.4%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz (SU4) “The Computer Unit”</td>
<td>42 (60.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forum (SU5) “Face-to-Face vs Online” (R)</td>
<td>30 (43.5%)</td>
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<td>Slide-show showcase (SU5) “Internet Applications”</td>
<td>37 (53.6%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forum (SU6) “Computer Crime” (K)</td>
<td>33 (47.8%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forum (SU6) “Privacy of Data” (R)</td>
<td>17 (24.6%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forum (SU1-6) “Let Me Help” (S)</td>
<td>14 (20.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forum (post-course) “The IBP Experience” (R)</td>
<td>11 (15.9%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Further Research re Technology Usage

In relation to ...

students’ lived experiences of online learning ...

- Operability
- Functionality
- Presentation
- Inclusivity of access
“Statistics might be interesting, but it is the endless possibilities to learn more about people that qualitative researchers resonate to …

the opportunity to connect with them [participants] at a human level”

(Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 13)
FURTHER RELATED RESEARCH

The series of research studies as they develop ...

- A small-scale *phenomenographic study* exploring variations in how (these) students starting out in HE come to experience networked learning

- A small-scale interpretative study using *constructivist grounded theory* techniques exploring views of students starting out in HE when it comes to formal online networked learning as a means for learning
In journey with participants

- Starting HE students transiting from compulsory schooling to reading university courses
- Researching ... as much about others ... as about self