Chapter 56
Online Participatory Learning for Low-Qualified Adult Learners

Gilberto Marzano

Rezekne Academy of Technologies, Rezekne, Latvia & Janusz Korczak University in Warsaw, Poland

Luis Ochoa Siguencia

The Jerzy Kukuczka Academy of Physical Education in Katowice, Katowice, Poland

ABSTRACT

Participatory learning and online learning are increasingly appealing as educational approaches which can positively affect learners. Participatory learning engages students as active participants in the full educational programme, including homework and exercises, whilst online learning offers tools that facilitate learners' collaboration and peer evaluation, minimising student and instructor overhead in the conduction of courses. This article reports on EScAlADE, a two-year EU-funded project initiated at the end of 2015, which focuses on the education of low-skilled adults through participatory online non-formal and informal learning. This article presents and discusses the first phase of the EScAlADE project. Indeed, although their project is still in progress, the authors decided to report on the survey they made at the beginning of the project as well as on a collaborative training event that took place in the intermediate project phase, since a few interesting findings have emerged from them.

INTRODUCTION

Researchers engaged in social analysis have defined contemporary society as an on-going risk society (Schedler, 1998; Schedler & Santiso,1998) that is increasingly creating conditions of poverty and social exclusion (de Greef, 2012). They point to globalisation, individualisation, and labour deregulation as the factors responsible for the increasing rates of unemployment, poverty, and social exclusion (Stiglitz, 2002; Heine & Thakur eds., 2011).

Recently, the OECD presented a bleak picture of adults with poor literacy skills (Figure 1), and reported that one in five adults, on average, has poor reading and numeracy skills (OECD, 2016). In Europe, the Cedefop-European Centre for the Development of Vocational Train*in*g calculated that adults with low or no qualifications comprise 30% of the unemployed (Dehmel, 2013).

Figure 1. Adults with poor literacy skills, as a percentage of all adults, aged 16 to 65 years; source: http://www.oecd.org/employment/ministerial/How-does-your-country-compare.pdf
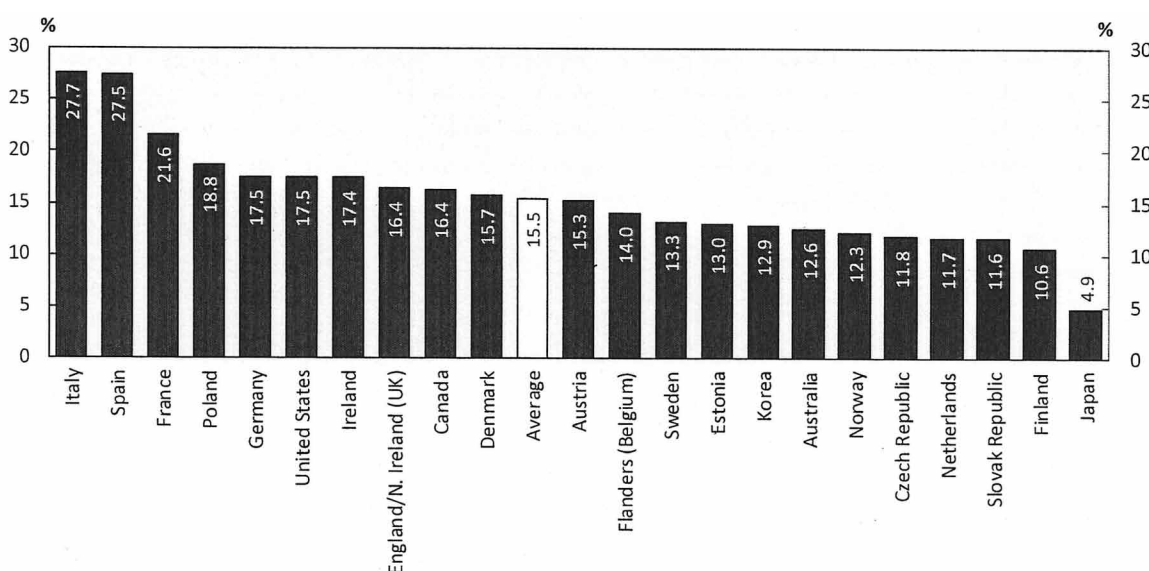
There is a broad consensus that education and lifelong learning represent the main keys for combating social inequality (Volles, 2016) as well as for mitigating some of the alarming consequences of rapid technological change. Today, most work tasks are becoming computerised or computer-guided, and this carries two negative consequences. The first is that digital technologies are changing some jobs completely, and causing others to disappear altogether. The second is that those lacking digital skills are at a significant disadvantage when they search for a job. These new types of low-qualified people - those who are being replaced by robots and electronic programmes and those who have poor digital competence – are increasing the population of low-skilled people.

There is a substantial agreement that it is necessary to intensify educational programmes for low-skilled adults, since a low level of skills both severely limits a person's employability and favours their social exclusion (de Greef, Verté & Segers, 2015; Windisch, 2016).

In contemporary society, education and employability are much more closely related than they were in the past. In fact, although a significant part of the overall labour market (45% globally) is represented by low skilled jobs today (International Labour Office, 2015), many of these jobs, such as waiters, retail stock assistants, retail cashiers, front desk receptionists, and so on, require specific physical abilities and mechanical skills. Paradoxically, nowadays, several low-skilled jobs actually need skills at higher levels than other jobs (Maxwell, 2006) and, as a consequence, require well-targeted educational interventions.

16 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may
be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:
www.igi-global.com/chapter/online-participatory-learning-for-low-qualified-adult-learners/279776

Related Content

Sitting Behavior and Physical Activity of College Students: Implications for Health Education and Promotion
Michelle Lee D'Abundo, Cara L. Sidmanand Kelly A. Fiala (2015). *International Journal of Adult Vocational Education and Technology (pp. 61-78).*
www.irma-international.org/article/sitting-behavior-and-physical-activity-of-college-students/133840

Implementing the Remote Observation of Graduate Interns: Best Practices and Lessons Learned
Teresa Petty, Richard Hartshorneand Tina L. Heafner (2012). *Developing Technology-Rich Teacher Education Programs: Key Issues (pp. 449-466).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/implementing-remote-observation-graduate-interns/61941

Making the Postsecondary Education Experience a Primary Focus for the Evolving Student Population: Establishing Curricula, Goals, and Metrics for Non-Traditional Learners
Craig M. Newman (2019). *Competency-Based and Social-Situational Approaches for Facilitating Learning in Higher Education (pp. 1-19).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/making-the-postsecondary-education-experience-a-primary-focus-for-the-evolving-student-population/227965

University Students' National Identity and Its Role in Dealing With the Coronavirus Pandemic in Saudi Arabia
Sarah M. Alajlan (2022). *International Journal of Adult Education and Technology (pp. 1-13).*
www.irma-international.org/article/university-students-national-identity-and-its-role-in-dealing-with-the-coronavirus-pandemic-in-saudi-arabia/313943

Sitting Behavior and Physical Activity of College Students: Implications for Health Education and Promotion
Michelle Lee D'Abundo, Cara L. Sidmanand Kelly A. Fiala (2015). *International Journal of Adult Vocational Education and Technology (pp. 61-78).*
www.irma-international.org/article/sitting-behavior-and-physical-activity-of-college-students/133840