Pathways

for

media
based
learning

Media based learning and
LABlearning are our pragmatic names
for learning processes using media
work as a motivator, driver and
organizer of learning outside the
traditional classroom

Our young and adult
"digital natives" are experts in social
media and media entertainment, but
certainly not in *learning with media.*
Neither are our teachers.
Or we.

Media based learning and
LABlearning aim to motivate, engage
and activate young and adult learners
at risk of drop-out or with poor
education experience, but can enrich
any learning process.

Media based learning and
LABlearning are also very powerful
activities in lifelong learning centers
and community centers fostering
lifelong learning and inclusion
through learning

MEDIA SUPPORTED LEARNING

Description

In different kinds of settings the learners will use digital media on every occasion possible – to search knowledge, to organize knowledge, to discuss knowledge and to present knowledge. Media elements such as internet, social media, Word, Power Point, video tools, etc., can be used by the learners to produce knowledge.

Use of digital media

The learners use all kinds of available media tools at different levels, depending on their media skills and interests, and on what tools are available.
It is important that the use of media includes being creative with media and the use of a variety of expression forms.

Didactic capacity

Media supported learning does not offer a didactic framework for learning, but it can support and make more interesting different learning approaches, such as problem based learning.

Example

Based on the challenges *Why do some young people suffer from lifestyle diseases*, the teams of learners search basic knowledge on the internet, organize the knowledge in Word or Power Point, discuss the problems in social platforms, produce a few videos with young people and present the full material on the institution's website.

MEDIA PRODUCTION LEARNING

Description

The learners work in teams to produce learning material on the relevant topic. They plan the production, they search raw material, they organize the content, they design the presentation forms, and they establish dialogues with the people who are expected to use the material.
The learners learn, not from using media material, but from producing useful material to other people, for example younger learners or families.

Use of digital media

The learners use media tools to produce material and therefore they will also have to use advanced media tools, such as graphic editing and web editing. Relevant media tools should be available to the learners and technical training at hand.

Didactic capacity

Media production learning can offer a strong didactic framework, able to organize the entire learning process in different phases.
The didactic drive is the logic of media production, but the subject-related learning outcomes can be very strong.
Often it is necessary to include professional media designers in the process.
Sufficient time must be allocated to the learners' media training, if needed.

Example

A team of learners is given a mission: in one month you should produce a high quality multimedia material on dementia and how to communicate with people

suffering from dementia.
The material will be used by younger learners and by learners in secondary school.
The learner team designs the material, supported by the teachers, and carry out the needed research and dialogues. They use the most relevant expression forms to present the content.
Finally, and supported by a professional media designer, the learner team produces a high quality material on dementia communication, combining different elements and forms of expression.

COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING

Description

The learners address the health needs of groups of people in the community and establish a number of dialogues with groups of citizens and with different stakeholders and players in the field.
The learning mission is to provide the community with alternative or innovative information, material or other forms of input that can help groups of people change their situation.
The learner team collaborates with the community all along the process.

Use of digital media

The use of media is not the key focus in this process. But on many occasions the creative use of media tools will improve the quality of the collaboration and the final outcomes. Media tools should be used to communicate with the community, search knowledge, organize knowledge and present knowledge to the community.
A special attention should be given to the creative use of media to offer the end users alternative ways of understanding the problems in question.

Didactic capacity

Community based learning is indeed capable of offering a strong didactic platform for the learning process. Community collaboration can cover all the phases of the learning process and offers a clear mission and structure to the learners.
The community didactic is characterized by setting up a mission beyond the world of the learners themselves: they are working and learning to benefit the community.
At the same time this framework offers many opportunities to use media in very creative ways.

Example

The learners are given a mission: school children are spending a lot of time using computers, mobile phones and other electronic devices. Some of them get very little physical exercise. Give the community some new input on, how this situation might be changed.

PROBLEM BASED LEARNING

Description

The learners are given a team challenge. A health problem in the community or among themselves is described.
The challenge to the learner teams is to find out how they will learn about the problem, and what they are going to do about it…

Therefore the learners need to discuss and to find out, how they are going to organize their learning of this topic. What will you do, who will you talk to, where will you find, how will you discuss, and how will you present the results of the learning.
The teacher acts as mentor and counselor, but does not interfere with the learning.

Use of digital media

In fact, the learners do not have to use media at all in this process. Nevertheless, the process will be far more creative, efficient and interesting if a wide range of media tools are involved. Relevant media tools can support the research, the planning, the communication, and the presentation of the outcomes.

Didactic capacity

Problem based learning is a strong didactic platform for the organisation of the learning process. The focus is on the *learning to learn* challenges, not primarily on the topics. Yet, strong subject-related outcomes can be expected from such a process.
The teachers and mentors involved need to be confident as to the practical use of this method, as the learning process can sometimes appear quite chaotic and full of roadblocks.

Example

It is a problem to the primary schools that many migrant families do not participate in the school's family events. It makes it difficult to support the migrant children's learning and integration.
The mission is to plan a learning process through which we will come to an understanding of the problem, from different points of views, and that will eventually propose some possible solutions to the problem.

GAME BASED LEARNING

Description

The learners use video games to study a topic, or a mosaic of related topics. The learners can work individually or in teams. The learning process should establish a strong interaction between the video game world and the learning environment surrounding the game world.
The gaming might include analyzing critically the game and the ways in which the game player interacts with the game.

Use of digital media

Interacting with video games, or learning games, offers a highly concentrated and challenging use of digital media. Many skills and competences can emerge from the gaming activities. However, working with video games is not necessarily that productive, meaning that video gaming should be accompanied by active, productive and designing use of media tools along the learning process.

Didactic capacity

Only in the case where the games employed are of a very high quality and covers many aspects of the learning process can game based learning offer a strong didactic platform. In most cases video gaming will be an element in the practicing of other didactic principles not specifically related to video gaming.
Good learning games do, though, often offer excellent learning experiences, not obtainable elsewhere in the learning process.

Example

The learners use a video game offering missions from within the human body: the body is influenced by different environmental sources, and the learner must find out about the impacts on the different elements of the body and try to combat the damages inflicted.
The game is structured in different levels, taking the learner to more and more complex tasks and demanding solutions.
The body game offers experiences that cannot be obtained in the real world.

GAME DESIGN LEARNING

Description

Learners can learn, not only from playing video games, but also, and perhaps even more so, from designing video games on different topics.
The process of designing a learning game is very demanding and complex, and it requires a variety of activities, most of them involving the use of digital media.
The design process is balancing between the learning of game design and the learning of specific topics or knowledge fields.

Use of digital media

Even though the design of learning games will often set out using paper and pen and a lot of discussion, the creative use of digital media might be very creative and demanding.
To illustrate the gameplay the learners will need to use graphics, progression tools, perhaps web based tools and most certainly elementary game programming.
The learning process might end at the point of the production of a demo, or it might go all the way and include the production of the full game or parts of the game.
In all cases, professional game designers should be involved and collaborate closely with the learners and the teachers.

Didactic capacity

Game design learning offers a very strong didactic platform, as the learning process can be organized according to the phases of game design.
The teachers involved should collaborate closely with a professional game designer to help the learners organize the process.
Although the learning process seems to be focused on game design, a lot of subject-related challenges will occur along this process, and eventually lots of good learning can result from such processes.
This leads to a piece of serious knowledge: the didactics of the learning process does not in any way need to be linked to the topics at all to offer strong subject-related learning outcomes.
Designing learning games is an excellent example of this.

Example

The learners are challenged with designing a video game on burnout.
Many teachers in primary school suffer from burnout symptoms and in some cases they lose their working capacity for a long time.
The video game should offer a game environment challenging the gamer to find creative ways of avoiding being a burnout victim.
The game should be developed in collaboration with, tested and used by primary school teachers.

SOCIAL GAMING LEARNING

Description

The learners engage in online gaming activities, in which they play a significant role in the progression of the game.
The social gaming might take the form of a serial, progressively feeding the learners with new content elements and challenges.
An important part of the gaming is the discussions between learners and players: how to collaborate, how to solve, how to progress...
Such social gaming processes can be established at high level, including long-term planning and plenty of resources, but it can also be designed as small in-school or between-schools scenarios, using quite simple media tools.
A groups of teachers should work together to design such social gaming processes.

Use of digital media

The social gaming activities are mostly focused on the use of social media and communicative tolls, but might include missions of producing media elements to progress in the game world.
The social gaming environments offer strong media based virtual collaboration competences, being key competences in the knowledge society.
Different forms of text based or video based synchronous communication might also be included.

Didactic capacity

The social gaming learning might simply be an element in learning processes organized by other principles, or it might constitute a regular element in any learning process.
But, in fact social gaming might also, at different levels of ambitions, be used as an organizer of the entire learning.
The teachers and mentors need to be familiar with such learning tools and be highly motivated to participate themselves.

Example

A game series in 12 episodes is produced by a group of schools in collaboration with a social game designer. The process will take 12 weeks and is about why many young people drop out of school and what happens to them afterwards.
The learners take active part in the discussions of the scenarios presented, and work together in teams competing on finding the best solutions and how to make the social game progress.
The winning teams might be offered an opportunity to produce a new social game in collaboration with the professional social game designer.
Alternatively a group of teachers can work together and produce such a series of scenarios at lower level and using the school's own web environment or online forums.
Social gaming learning might be carried out within popular virtual worlds, such as Sims or Second Life.

SOCIAL NETWORKING LEARNING

Description

The learners engage in online platforms, game-like or not, with learners from other schools or even countries. The learners are constantly challenged with problems,

situations or scenarios they have to find out about and communicate about.
The discussions and activities in the platform might include media productions to be discussed with other learners.
Social networking learning is different from social game learning as it does not include gaming, but is focused on exploration and collaboration in virtual platforms.

Use of digital media

The learning process will be focused on the use of virtual communication and collaborative tools, but the learner missions should also include the production of small media products, such as Power Points or videos as integrated elements in the virtual collaboration.
Different forms of text based or video based synchronous communication might also be included.

Didactic capacity

Social networking learning might be used as an organizer of the learning process, but in most cases social networking would be an element in a learning process organized by other principles. In such cases social networking might offer a strong collaborative dimension.
Social networking learning also offers strong and interesting opportunities for the learners to collaborate with learners from other schools, from the community and from other countries (for example in the case of language learning).

Example

The learning teams in a Danish college are challenged with collaborating with a Spanish college exploring and discussing the alcohol habits among young people in the two countries.
The learners are expected to collect evidence and produce multimedia material explaining the different alcohol habits, and to discuss the problem and the material in English and in Spanish.
In advanced cases such learning processes might result in the production of a joint website with relevant material.

SCENARIO BASED LEARNING

Description

Scenarios are very different from games. Games are quite demanding as to rules, progression and programming, whereas scenarios are short narratives demonstrating a life situation or a fictive situation.
Scenarios can be produced with simple tools like Power Point or any digital storytelling tool available, it can be set up as a website – or it can be a series of small videos.
The learner teams' mission is to work with the scenarios, respond to the scenarios – and to produce new scenarios taking the topics in question further.
If resources are available, scenarios might also be produced at high level with professional media tools. Normally this would include collaboration with media designers.

Use of digital media

The learners engage in learning with simple media tools and communication tools, but they should also respond to the scenarios presented by developing new scenarios with a variety of simple or advanced media tools.
The focus might be put on expressing oneself with the most relevant media available, and to explore how different media could be used to develop scenarios.

Didactic capacity

Depending on the ambition level of the scenarios such activities might form the backbone of a good learning process. It might as well, though, simply be a learning activity among others in settings based on other principles.
In advanced cases the scenarios might work as an organizer of a full learning process.
Scenario based learning offers the teachers and learners a variety of simple and more complex opportunities to simulate real life challenges.

Example

An elderly citizen suffers from severe diabetes.
A series of dramatic scenarios are developed, using drawing, text and small videos, in which the elderly citizen is not caring well for her diabetes, but bringing her in difficult situations.
The learners will work with the scenarios, and produce new scenarios to present their solutions to the difficulties.
Advancing this example might mean the production of a series of video based scenarios.

VIRTUAL SIMULATION BASED LEARNING

Description

Simulations are not games. They present a part of life in digital format to explore. Many such virtual worlds are simulations. The freedom of action for the learner can be very different, but the basic idea is to allow the learner and the team to explore often complex situations that cannot be explored directly in real life, for different reasons.
The simulated world might include challenges and tasks, and even larger missions.
The virtual world might represent a very small part of real life, or it might be historical simulations over time.
A simulated world might be about how to communicate with a citizen suffering from dementia - or it might be about the functioning of an entire hospital or work place.
Quality simulations are quite demanding to design and produce and therefore quite expensive.
It is, in some cases, possible to construct such simulated worlds in existing platforms such as Sims or Second Life.

Use of digital media

The learners will be working a lot with media in virtual worlds. They will learn to construct, problem solve and navigate and collaborate in virtual environments. Usually they will not produce with digital tools themselves, but it is possible to include digital production in the missions of the virtual worlds, or in connection with the activities in the surrounding real-life learning environment.

Didactic capacity

Simulation learning might be used as elements in different kinds of learning processes organized by other principles, but in the case of a high-level (="epic") virtual world, the entire learning process might be linked to and embedded in such a structure. In this case virtual simulation based learning might constitute a strong didactic platform.

Example

The human body has been animated into a simulation world and the learners can travel along the natural transportation infrastructure of the body to explore different elements in the body, such as the heart, the liver, the blood, etc.

The simulation world can offer open exploration, or it can include different emerging challenges and missions, for instance emerging from outer world incidents impacting the functioning of the body.
In fact, there are no limits to the scope of such simulations and missions, but such simulations should be targeting large-scale audiences, as they are very expensive to produce.

TRAINEESHIP BASED LEARNING

Description

Many educations include periodically traineeships in which the learner practices skills and competences in real life work situations.
During the traineeship the learners might be challenges with producing evidence of their experiences. They might use different media tools to explain what they are learning and what problems they encountered. The media products might be discussed with other trainees from time to time and be presented to new learners to prepare them for the traineeships.
In fact, the media products might also be presented to the work places to invite them to learn to better mentor and support the trainees.
The same is possible in learner mobility activities.

Use of digital media

Besides online communication with people from the education and the work place, the learner will be challenged with finding out how to best organize and present the work place experience: how can I make others understand my learning and my problems by using the most expressive and relevant media?
Should I use texts, pictures, drawings, videos – or should I combine different expression forms? And how to illustrate and express different forms of experience?

Didactic capacity

Structuring and presenting ones experience might very well be a strong organizer of the traineeship. The entire traineeship could be organized into challenges linked to structuring and presenting what you learn and what kind of problems you have during the traineeship.
Presented in this way, the experience would be more interesting to people involved in the traineeship, and to new learners.
Of course, media work in traineeships might also simply be carried out at lower level at milestone points, or as post festum reflections on the traineeship outcomes.

Example

A young migrant is engaged in a traineeship in a centre for elderly.
Some of the elderly have great difficulties with the young migrant's language and accent, as they suffer from reduced hearing and concentration.
The young migrant agrees with the school mentor to illustrate and present these experiences by video interviews with some of the elderly and by producing a media log during the traineeship.

RESEARCH BASED LEARNING

Description

This learning pathway focuses on using digital media to search useful knowledge, to review useful knowledge critically, to organize useful knowledge and to present useful knowledge in user-friendly ways.

The internet is the basic tool, and the mission is to find the most relevant knowledge on the topic in question, but also to identify different expression forms in which this knowledge has been successfully delivered. This, then, includes critically media reflection: how is this knowledge presented in the best way to people expected to use the knowledge?

This critical reflection leads to the second part of the mission: how can we organize the knowledge in a new way, using different media, to allow a better understanding of the topic among the users?

Actually, the title of this pathway might be: how to work with and form knowledge?

Use of digital media

The learner will use the internet in many different ways, and become an "expert" in the quest for relevant knowledge.

But the learner will also engage in critical reflections on different forms of media expressions: how might the users of the knowledge benefit from certain forms of presentations and not from others?

Finally the critical reflection should lead to a process in which the knowledge elements are combined and presented in a new way, taking into account the profile and needs of the users. In this part of the process, the learner will choose the most relevant media and produce a media product presenting the knowledge in a new way.

Didactic capacity

It is obvious that such activities can be integrated in many different learning processes, governed by different principles.

But in fact, research based learning might offer a strong didactic framework, as the knowledge work might structure the entire learning process.

In this case research based learning provides a very strong didactic platform.

Example

Cancer patients in hospitals are often presented with piles of information. A lot of this information is bureaucratic, unorganized and very difficult to digest for a patient in the middle of a serious crisis.

The team of learners is challenged with this mission: find the relevant knowledge that need to be transmitted to the cancer patients (or a sub-group of cancer patients), analyze critically the quality of the information taking into account the situation of the users, and produce an alternative way of making the patient aware of this content.

Discuss the outcomes with the hospital staff responsible for the production of cancer patient information.

"COMPUTER CLUBHOUSE BASED LEARNING"

Description

A Computer Clubhouse setting is not a "didactics" -or, is it?
In a Computer Clubhouse the media interest is not linked to a specific topic forming part of the curricula, as in formal education. Instead the media interest is linked to... media. And, especially to the personal interests and talents of the people working in the clubhouse.
The clubhouse offers the learner time and space to explore how media can be used to take your talents or interests further – and to engage in in-depth media learning.
The clubhouse is often used to motivate or re-motivate young people, and to allow them to build up a reinforced self-confidence and a number of important basic learning to learn skills.

Use of digital media

The learner engages in all kinds of media learning, such as graphics, animation, video, music, etc., including social networking, and explores what media can do for the learner and her personal talents, aspirations or secret hopes.
The focus is on media work and how to express oneself and ones "cause" in the most creative way. The clubhouse activities are linked to community networking.

Didactic capacity

The Computer Clubhouse "didactics" is based on a series of principles allowing the learner to explore media tools and media expressions.
The clubhouse environments are non-formal learning settings and the learners attend out of their free will.
The clubhouse world can be established as an after-school provision, or it could be integrated in formal educations in the form of "free space for media exploration".
Very often such provisions are addressing young people not working well in formal education, early school leavers, or learners at risk of dropping out.

Example

At the Aarhus Social and Healthcare College the drop-out rate is very high. Many young people enroll in the education without really knowing why and what it's about.
Instead of accepting drop-out, the College might establish a "Computer Clubhouse" at the heart of the College or in a neighboring building. The clubhouse should be open every afternoon and can be used by learners at the College at risk of dropping-out, and by learners having recently left the education.
The clubhouse environment is an alternative to dropping-out and to continue to mal-function in the classes.

WEB BASED LEARNING

Description

This media learning pathway is about changing traditional education material and classroom teaching into media based materials and collaborative team work.
The education produces a "world" of web based multimedia material, in some cases including learning games and social networking platforms, often in collaboration with media designers.
The learners will explore this material, typically organized in sections with facts,

narratives, scenarios and links, combine the material in a useful way, and add new elements from online search.
The learners will produce media products as outcomes of the learning and thus contribute to the variety of material in the web based "world".

Use of digital media

Learners will use all kinds of digital materials in the learning process, including collaborative communication tools.
Learners will train their ability to combine digital material and also combine knowledge embedded in different "languages", such as texts, videos, scenarios, graphics, links, etc.
Last, but not least, they will be encouraged to use media tools to present the outcomes of the learning.
In certain cases, the learners are encouraged to take their media skills further and explore more advanced media tools.

Didactic capacity

The established "world" of web based multimedia material might very well constitute a well-functioning didactic platform, encompassing the entire learning process.
The media didactics of "find-organize-present" can be a strong organizer of the team learning.
The advantage of this pathway is that it can be used at different levels, without compromising the very idea of the principles. And, it can form a part of any learning process governed by other didactic principles.

Example

Working with and supporting people in deep crisis, due to severe illness, can be very demanding and complicated.
To support the learning of the College's care students, sosuMedia – the in house media team – produced a large and very qualified material for the learners to explore. The material was designed in close collaboration with the teachers at the College, and it also included video interviews with people in severe crisis situations.
As the College owns the productions, the College can decide to further develop the material, to include productions from the learners or to share the material with other educations.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS
to media based learning and LABlearning

Media based activities work best in long-term processes and in cross-disciplinary settings – allow time for learners to train their media skills

Involve media designers or game designers in the planning and in the learning process itself

Ensure the availability of qualified and state of the art technology

Remember that there are many different ways to learning outcomes, most of them being non-linear

Allow yourself to learn with and from the students

You do not have to become a media expert yourself – you are a professional learning organizer and you should be allowed to involve media resources when needed