

Learning and technology in the millennium generation

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Objectives

In broad terms, we aim at contributing for a better understanding of young people's behavior when they use the computer and the internet for different autonomous learning tasks, namely:

- Which applications, contents and interactions are preferred by the students in different learning contexts and challenges?
- What are the relationships between the observed behavior (and underlying learning strategies), the students' individual characteristics, the nature of the activities (themes, tasks, evaluation, etc), and the effectiveness of the learning?
- Has the usage of technology led to the development of new learning methods or did it just add new means/tools?

Methodology

The need of focusing the investigation in the processes, the complexity of the theme and its connection to the contexts, has led us into the choice of the multiple-case study methodology.

Participants: 504 students from 5 Portuguese schools were validated. This makes up a total of 58 sessions with 7 different non-curricular themes and various activities oriented to diverse cognitive processes.

The behavior was monitored through the log computer activity and transactional logs obtained from the supporting LMS platform (moodle) for the proposed activities (pictures 1 to 3).

Expected Results

A better knowledge about young people's behavior, when using technology for their own learning, may provide important information for the drafting of programs to improve the autonomous learning effectiveness, which, in using the resources available in the internet, is a key competence for achieving success in a global, fast-changing civilization.

To find the relationship between behavioral patterns (picture 4) and the learning effectiveness, may be a starting point for the renewal of the teachers' teaching strategies, as they are now facing the generalized usage of computers and internet, and also a starting point in the continuous search in the school's innovativeness.

Without funds but with many debts of gratitude.

