

Gamelearn project – 7th article- **Distance learning during COVID-19 lockdown**

In the study published by OECD (Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners, TALIS 2018 Results – Volume I) only 39% of teachers in the EU feel well prepared for using digital technologies in their daily work. Almost 60% of respondents to the open public consultation on the Digital Education Action Plan had not used distance and online learning before the COVID-19 crisis and 95% of them consider that the coronavirus crisis marks a turning point for how digital technology is used in education and training.

When the COVID-19 lockdown happened, the school system had to switch to distance learning overnight. Some schools had previously used some electronic content in classical lessons as a supplement, but the lockdown meant that all content had to be moved to electronic format. Even though distance learning has been known for many years, the resulting situation caught educational institutions unprepared. Due to the lack of electronic content, teachers mostly resorted to the classic video conference connection, where they explained the content of the course as if they were in school. The consequences of such teaching were resulted in lags in processed learning material, reduced attention of students and phenomena such as feelings of anxiety due to the lack of social contacts, as well as reduced motivation, and the lack of concentration. There are several reasons for this situation. The inexperience of the teachers, who suddenly had to conduct remote teaching, the lack of content adapted for this type of teaching and low interaction with the students. To keep attention of the students, voice over power point slides, however good they are is simply not enough.



It is necessary to add some additional online learning interactive features that keep students motivated and engaged

- Real-world case studies. Teaching often requires examples to show certain principles in action.
- Online debates. ...
- Whiteboard teaching. ...
- Classroom newspaper. ...
- Trivia competitions. ...
- Comic strip. ...
- Video newscast. ...
- Google Earth scavenger hunt.



interactive features in the distance learning a teacher will soon lose the attention of the students. According to students experience this was the major problem during lockdown. Some of such moments were displayed in the movie produced by the students themselves (see figure 1).

It is worth noting that there is a digital gap between students who manage and proficiently use digital devices and teachers who have grown-up in analogue era. Students belong to Generation Z experienced in using Internet and portable digital technology from a young age. Some of the characteristics of the Generation Z are summarised below:

- frequently uses smartphones in interpersonal communication,
- spends a lot of time playing computer games,
- reads fewer books and newspapers,
- may stay up till 2 AM using smart phones and social media,
- they expect digital learning tools to be deeply integrated into their education



Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 2: Student playing a game during the on-line class (snapshot from the Vegova students movie, 2022)

Playing games is an important characteristic of the generation Z. The students are playing computer games, whether we like it or not. Adding this technology (where possible) will improve learning results. Game based learning is typically instructionally designed to provide balance between subject matter that needs to be learned, playing games and the capability of the learners to apply the knowledge and skills in the real world.

The biggest challenge with distance learning has always been a substantial lag in communication. One of the core necessities of effective learning is the ability to have (and use) two-way communication between the instructors and the students. What has been known from the beginning of distance learning is to maintain the focus and motivation. The existing techniques has to be upgraded with the game elements such as Points, Levels, Missions, Badges, Leaderboards, Unlocks, Events Feed, Quiz and Visual Progress. Despite some opinions, predicting the future of gaming in relation with education (see Figure 3), integration of game elements into “conventional” learning activities will increase engagement and motivation of the new generations of students.

Dissemination

Project news and results will be published on the project website available at this link.

<https://www.gamelearnproject.eu/partners>

Q Do you think the current popularity of video games is going to last?



Sharon B
Word processor

"No. I don't think video games will last' because they are not educational. Video games are just a fad that will slowly fade away. The public always gets bored and turns to something else. Just wait and see."

Daily News, Wednesday, December 1, 1982

Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 3: Do you think the current popularity of video games is going to last? (Daily news December 1, 1982)