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Erasmus+ project ABC to VLE: beyond curriculum design

2018-UK01-KA203-048123

UNIMI – case study 1

Summary

Different types of ABC workshops have been proposed at UNIMI, and we can broadly group them into two macro-groups:

- 1) workshops for teachers
- 2) workshop for students

This case study refers to the second group, where students were involved in the design production of new and extra-curricular courses or in the re-design of courses they had attended during the year.

Institution:

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO, MILANO, ITALIA, Erasmus+ ABC to VLE project partner

Description:

ABC for students: different opportunities for students' involvement

Authors:

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Date:

June 2020



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Introduction:

ABC was introduced at the University of Milan in 2017, following years of successful collaboration between University College London and the University of Milan within the digital education thematic group of the League of European Research Universities (LERU). Between January 2017 and September 2018, we held many editions of the workshop for different groups of teachers.

In September 2018 (i.e. 6 months after the submission of the ABC to VLE project), there was a change of governance and the newly elected Rector decided to bring back the task of innovating teaching within the former technology centre for teaching (CTU). The subsequent reorganization of duties and roles ended up in a sort of "freeze" of the process of institutionalization of ABC as an internal practice.

Nevertheless, we continued to work on it in the framework of the ABC to VLE project with localization, adaptation, and dissemination activities. We first adapted ABC to be used with students and this is the main topic of this case study.

Course details:

Within this case study we describe two specific experiences of students' involvement: in one case the goal was to ask the students to design a course on QA to be attended by their colleagues; in the other case, the goal was to verify if and how students could be involved in facilitating the redesign of a course, thanks to their experience as students who attended the course during the previous year.

Case Study

Context of change

In the context of this specific case study, there was no specific institutional intention to target student involvement.

With respect to the two specific options of students' involvement that we have identified, the motivations can therefore be traced back to a specific intent to involve students in identifying course's design options able to facilitate students' attendance of a course on QA, and, in the other case by the intention of the nursing degree (master level) leadership to experiment a new model of redesign that would exploit the feedback of the students in a richer way.

ABC workshop plan

STUDENTS AS DESIGNERS

The training project on Quality Assurance for students at the University of Milan aimed at achieving the following training objectives:



- knowledge of the Quality Assurance System (QA) and therefore of all the processes related to: design, management, self-evaluation of training and scientific activities

- knowledge of the improvement processes related to both the initial and periodic accreditation procedures.

The principle of participatory planning was used by involving the final users of the training course as "actors" of the training process. In accordance, two macro-design workshops were organized:

- 30 May 2019 (11 students participating)

- 24 June 2019 (14 students participating)

These 2 workshops originated some structured proposals regarding the training action to be conducted. In each workshop the students were divided into two groups, heterogeneous within them and homogeneous among themselves.

In this process - normally carried out by teachers of the university during the pedagogical redesign phase - students were accompanied by a moderator and a content expert.

The objective of this workshop was to arrive at the macro-design of both the informative and the training component addressed to the UNIMI students, through the involvement of the students themselves, especially for the identification of agile and effective ways to reach and involve the students in the QA process.

ABC PLAN

Who	what	time
Educational expert	Methods and tools introduction	10 mins
AQ expert	Topic introduction	15 mins
Team work	Macro-design	40 mins
Plenary session	Output presentation and discussion	20 mins
Educational expert	closing, recap	5 mins

The workshop also included a design part of the information action, which we do not deal with in this context and therefore does not fit into the description of the experience.



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STUDENTS AS RE-DESIGNERS

The other experience of active student involvement was in the course " Deontologia infermieristica/ostetrica e regolamentazione dell'assistenza infermieristica/ostetrica" of the master's degree in nursing.

In this case, we could say that it was a more "traditional" ABC workshop than the one just described: the students acted in the teacher's shoes.

The students were distributed across groups and worked in parallel on the same re-design of the course.

ABC design

STUDENTS AS DESIGNERS

The outputs of the (two) workshops conducted gave rise to three types of products for each group of students. In each workshop the students were divided into two groups, heterogeneous within them and homogeneous among themselves. Four objects were produced for each of the 3 types of output listed below:

- The graph representing the training project
- The storyboard of the training process
- A proposal for an information/communication action (which is not further discussed in this document)

The outputs of each individual group of students are then presented below.

GROUP 1



GROUP 3

Arena Blended Connected (ABC) - Workshop di progettazione didattica

Corso di Studi **QUALITÀ IN UNIVERSITÀ**
 Insegnamento **UNIQALITY**
 Nuova edizione/Riprogettazione
 Docenti **Luca Caboteta, Vera Riccio del maschio, Signat Cantor, Colleen Chipurua, Tiziana ROBERTO, Chiara Bertoni**
 Data del workshop **24/02/2019**
 Descrizione insegnamento (descrizione modello tweet: 140 caratteri massimo):
 Non sei soddisfatto con la qualità dell'insegnamento? Vuoi cambiare la situazione? Questo è il posto giusto per te!
 #Uniquality
 @ABC_LD

Grafico 1 - Attività per tipologia di apprendimento
 Rappresentazione del vostro insegnamento: PREVISIONI INIZIO WORKSHOP (in rosso)
 Rappresentazione del vostro insegnamento: RISULTATI A FINE WORKSHOP (in blu)

Grafico 2 - Distribuzione fra didattica online e didattica in presenza
 Distribuzione fra didattica online e didattica in presenza: PREVISIONI INIZIO WORKSHOP (in rosso)
 Distribuzione fra didattica online e didattica in presenza: RISULTATI A FINE WORKSHOP (in blu)

Produced by Digital Education UCL, translated by Manuela Milani e iro Pizelli, Università degli Studi di Milano
 Learning types, Diana Laurillard, 1st 2017 | Connected Curriculum, Dilly Fung, CALT, 2014 | ABC curriculum design workshop and resources, Chai Young and Nazara Perani, Digital Education, UCL, 2015

ABC (Arena Blended Connected) progettazione didattica



STUDENTS AS RE-DESIGNERS

The design of the workshop has not in this case been modified compared to the "traditional" format used in UNIMI, which sees a lengthening of time compared to the original format.

The other element of adaptation, present also in this case, is the addition of a form proposed after the work phase on the storyboard. In this form teachers (and, in this case, students) are asked to reflect *ex post* on the designed learning path, thus verifying which learning objectives are achievable.

What support was required/provided

As already mentioned, an involvement of students as designers rather than re-designers implies the involvement of a "content expert". In the case of an experience of student involvement as a re-designer then the involvement of the teacher who is the owner of the course being redesigned is crucial.

Impact and evaluation

No data (qualitative or quantitative) are available at the moment to evaluate the impact of the two experiences.

Successes and lessons learnt

A virtuous "chain" mechanism has been generated: the students involved in the workshop have imagined themselves as actors in the process of training their peers and, in their designs, the students who will be trained are often imagined as actors in the process of disseminating information.

Scalability and transferability

The involvement of the students as a support to the redesign of a course, appears to be an excellent opportunity, but with some attention points:

- the teacher in charge of the course being redesigned must be involved and approve the project;
- better: the proposal should start from the teacher; this is almost a precondition for the success of the initiative.

The risk to be avoided is that a redesign experience by the students is guided by a hypercritical attitude of the students. It is therefore essential that the teacher her/himself "motivates" the reasons for the redesign and enhances the support of the students, making them feel "in the shoes" of the teacher and not in the role of her/his evaluators.