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Participatory Action Research/Action Learning: Contributing to Participants Understanding of the Concept of Community Work

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Background



Social Work – Virtual Campus
EU-funded project 2008-2010
12 European HEI partners

Aim: an online module in
Community Work with virtual
learning material

Empirical field for PAR/PAL research



Research Question

What is the best way to construct a learning arena in Community Work that demonstrates the use of Community Work Theory and Methods including Participatory, Emancipatory and Democratic spaces for Co-Construction of Knowledge?

Participants:

Teachers

Students

Researchers

Community Work – Action Research



CW is a planned process to mobilise communities to use their own social structures and resources to address their own problems and achieve their own objectives. It focuses on *participation* and fosters empowerment, emancipation and change through collective action. CW is closely related to work for human rights. The community work process is about people in communities creating opportunities for growth and change.

Curriculum Plan Community Work,
SW-VirCamp,2012

Research process



CW Course teachers process	Survey to students in the CW pilot
Reflection on the research questions by teachers on e –mail.	
Focus Group interview with teachers before starting on the Curriculum Plan	
Transcript sent for feedback to teachers	
Group interview with teachers before the course starts	Start survey to students
Transcript sent for feedback to T.	Results reported to students asking for feedback and suggestions for Q. for the next survey
Group interview online in the middle of the course	Midway survey to students
Transcript sent for feedback to T.	Results reported to students asking for feedback and suggestions for Q. for the next survey
Group interview at the end of the pilot course	Final Survey to students
Evaluation report	Evaluation report

Participatory learning



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Green Park
Presented by the Gardener

Community Case
Welcome to the Green Park Community
This blog will introduce you to people using the park and living nearby. Maja is the one who started this blog, giving voice to people using the park. In her first blogpost she presents herself with a short video: [Maja's presentation](#)
When you enter the Green Park you will be watching the events with the eyes of a community worker.
[ENTRANCE TO THE GREEN PARK COMMUNITY BLOG](#)

vir camp
European Union
Regional Development Fund

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Green Park Community Blog

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map view text view

Info boards in the park
November 5th, 2009

The other day when I was talking with Yusuf, he came up with an idea which I found very useful. He talked about the lack of communication between the different groups using the park, and proposed that we could put up two or three big information boards in central places in the park, which everybody could use.

At present there is only one "official" board with information from the city government, which is illegal for others to use. The only means for ordinary people to inform others now, is to fasten notes on poles. This is not very satisfactory and also is also ugly to look upon.

Therefore I give this idea to the Park neighbour committee and hope they will act on it.

(But they must not end up like this! It's the responsibility of us all...)

Photo:
Auntie P

Archives

- » November 2009
- » October 2009
- » September 2009
- » August 2009
- » July 2009
- » June 2009

Recent Comments

- » dennis hermans on It's a shame!
- » dennis hermans on Give us the park back!!
- » deborah on In memory of Anthony!
- » Anna on A successfully evening
- » Anna on Join forces?

Tag Cloud

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Research process



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Start survey to students

Results reported to students asking for feedback and suggestions for Q. for the next survey

Midway survey to students

Results reported to students asking for feedback and suggestions for Q. for the next survey

Final Survey to students

Evaluation report



How did the research
process trigger the
participants understanding
of CW?

Teacher group interviews / discussions triggered:



- A discourse on the core concepts
- A clarification of the teacher role and power relation students- teachers
- How to work in an emancipatory way in an e-learning course
- How to support the students in their learning process

Respect and open discussions



«It is a very respectful environment. And lots of discussions, sometimes very strong discussions, tough discussions. Even clashes of cultures. But it always is with respect. The team situation is a good one. Synergy between persons, support us to work in a constructive way. And there is always space to say what we think and to come back and talk things over. The situation is a good one»

(R1 external evaluation report)

A new teacher role

«By working with VirCamp we have been more organized, more strategic and have new ideas for research. Also in the ways of teaching; We now give more importance to the work of the students, give more input to the students' work. And participating – we give them a voice. Then things have changed completely. It has changed the concrete behaviour in the classrooms. And the students give good feedback to us; they think that we work in a very good way»

(R2 – external evaluation report)

Citation from one of the teachers

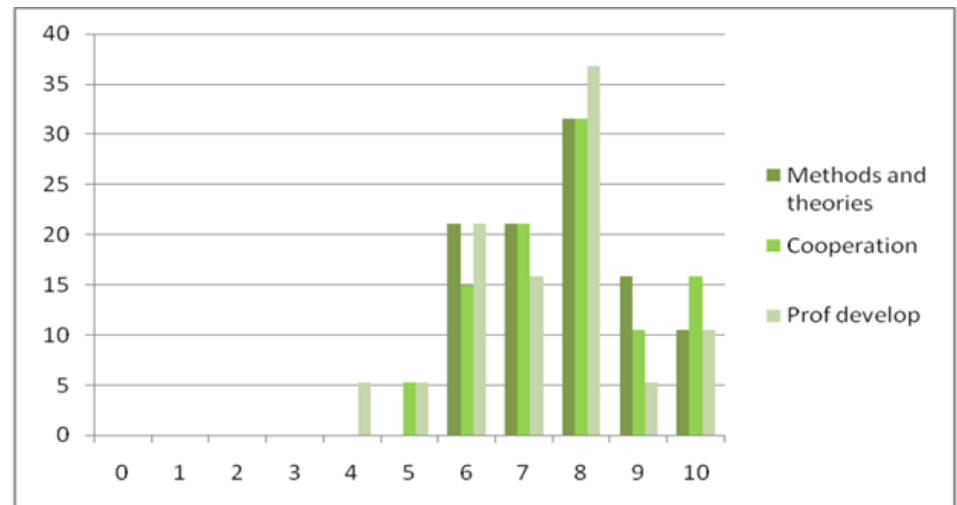


' I do not feel like a controller ... I feel like a counselor, who looks with them into the process. By asking them questions and giving them some suggestions I stimulate them to find their way'.



Students' (n19/ N23)

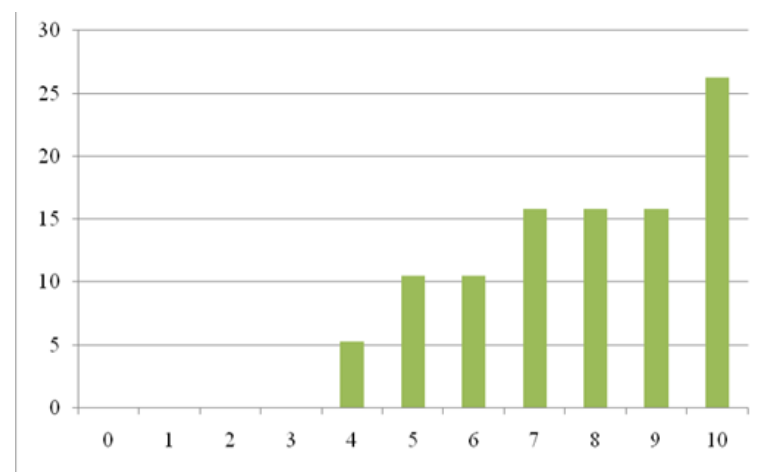
Students ranking of competences achieved (related to competences stated in the CP)





Students' (n19/ N23)

Students answer to the question: «*The course has shown me how to link theory to practice*»:



Citations from one student



“CW for me is not to take over the work but to help the community in the right direction, and help the community to take action by themselves for themselves”.

Another student



“I believe that Community work includes two perspectives, top-down and bottom-up- Bottom-up because the work has to come from within the community members and top-down because some sort of connection and guidance from the city or state has to be included””

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News

NEW 6-PEDAGOGY COURSE
18.02.2010 10:21

Social Work-Virtual Campus - A Campus without Borders
Welcome to European Social Work study on the Internet
This virtual campus aims to deliver online courses, information about international industry studies in social work



Questions??

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