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SCIENCE FOR THE PROFESSIONS

**EUROPEAN LECTURERS' PERCEPTIONS OF
INTERACTIVE TOOLS IN LEARNING MANAGEMENT
SYSTEMS**

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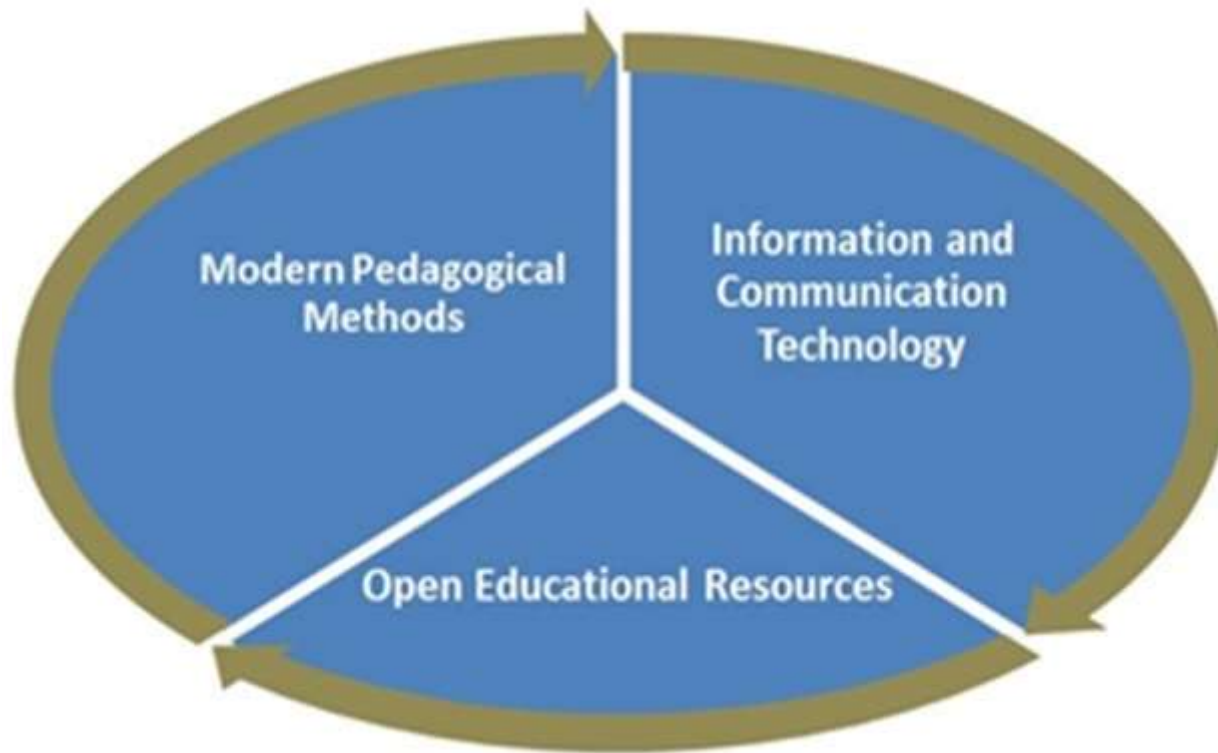
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COMPUTER SUPPORTED EDUCATION



EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE

Tools for distribution of documents

- allow lecturers to upload documents and make them available for the students (i.e. text documents, media files).

Tools for communication

- allow information to go either way as well as from student-to-student (i.e. E-mail).

Tools for interaction

- call for reaction and feedback (discussion boards, wikis etc.)

Tools for course management

- tools that are primarily intended to monitor and document the educational process, rather than facilitate teaching or learning



THE BENEFITS OF INTERACTIVE TOOLS

According to constructivist theories of learning interactive and collaborative methods can:

- ❑ Promote group identity and facilitate peer support and recognition.
- ❑ Enhance the students intellectual maturation and personal development.
- ❑ Teach students to exercise freedom of expression in a responsible and constructive way.
- ❑ Enable universities to promote democratic values and hence justify academic freedom.



LECTURERS' ATTITUDES AND THEIR USE OF EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE

- ❑ This study compares the use of Learning Management Systems (LMS) at two universities; University of Borås, Sweden and University of Jaen, Spain.
- ❑ Focus was on Online Asynchronous Discussions (OAD).
- ❑ About 100 lecturers responded to our questionnaire.



MAJOR FINDINGS

- ❑ In both countries interactive tools are used sparingly, only a few lecturers and students use OAD and other tools for interaction routinely.
- ❑ There are only small differences in the actual use of LMS between Sweden and Spain.
- ❑ The lecturers in Spain are more positive to mandatory use of online discussion as a pedagogical tool than lecturers in Sweden.
- ❑ Lecturers in arts and humanities are more positive to the use of interactive tools than those in the STEM field.



BARRIERS TO A WIDER USE OF TOOLS FOR INTERACTION

- ❑ Demands from government that higher education must be justified by impact on economic growth.
- ❑ A view of knowledge as a marketable commodity.
- ❑ A view of education that concentrates on transmitting the subject specific and testable content of a course.
- ❑ A view of knowledge as something memorized and tested to provide the basis for the awarding of diplomas.
- ❑ Under this paradigm of education, interaction and collaborative learning is of little interest to the universities or to the students.



THE ALTERNATIVE VIEWPOINT

- ❑ In social constructivist theories of learning knowledge is something created by the learner in a process stimulated by interaction with other people.
- ❑ Higher education is a tool for intellectual development and personal growth, not just training for some career.
- ❑ Under this paradigm both lecturers and students can appreciate the benefits of collaboration and interaction.



THE PURPOSE OF UNIVERSITIES

- ❑ We prepare for the future by learning how to think, not memorizing what to think.
- ❑ We test and refine our thoughts only by exposing them to fierce critique and seriously consider alternative ideas.
- ❑ By promoting public debate and facilitating freedom of expression in a responsible and constructive way universities can justify academic freedom in a democratic society.





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Thank you!

Questions?