

## ONLINE WEB TOOLS: FORMING AN EUROPEAN COMMUNITY OF LEARNING<sup>1</sup>

**Andreea Pausan, PhD student**

Department of International Relations and European Integration,  
National School of Political and Administrative Studies,  
Bucharest/Romania  
*apausan.ap@gmail.com*

### **Abstract**

In an age when the information and communication technology (ICT) is part of our daily lives, education changes to accommodate the growing need of users to interact and engage across geographical distances.

This implies both a change of infrastructure to include the new ICT instruments and a change of student teacher relationships as they adapt to the new environment. What online tools to deem most appropriate to use so they convey the desired message is a challenge, partly due to the large offer available, and, partly, due to the lack of familiarity and the hesitance in approaching these tools. This paper is a narrative viewed through the lens of social learning theory of a training course on education web tools with participants from six countries in Europe, sponsored by the Erasmus + Program of the European Union. Its purpose is to present an example of collaborative project aimed at introducing online tools to youth workers.

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper was first presented at the “Investing in Youth for a Sustainable Future” conference held in Skopje, Macedonia, on 4-5 October 2018, by the International Balkan University.

The five different projects presented at the end, as well as the feedback from the participants, confirm this type of program answers a need of educators to know more about online tools. Furthermore, the incipient stages of building a community were exhibited. This facilitated learning and collaboration, while allowing the participants to create valuable artefacts.

Methods: The paper used the researcher's journal and observations, artefacts created during the exercises, feedback from the students at the end of the training, and reflexive letters from participants and organisers after the group training was completed. All this information was organized into a narrative that showed what happened during the one-week training, with focus on collaborative learning.

### **Keywords**

Collaborative learning, community of learning, digitalisation, online tools

## **1.INTRODUCTION**

In an age when the World Wide Web is part of our daily lives, how education is done is shifting to incorporate the information and communication technology (ICT) and to accommodate the growing need of users to interact and engage across geographical distances. To accomplish this change, both a change of infrastructure to include the new ICT instruments and a change of student teacher relationships as they adapt to the new environment are required.

### **1.1.Background**

Choosing as the most appropriate to convey the desired message is a challenge, in part due to the large offer available, and, in part, due to the lack of familiarity and the hesitance in approaching these tools.

Teachers, trainers, youth workers and policy makers within the European Union (EU) have been working together to address this challenge with the Europe 2020

program aimed at smart, sustainable growth, social inclusion, and reduction of poverty through, among other key-points, creating a digital agenda, encouraging youth mobility, increasing the number of higher education adult graduates while decreasing the rate of early school leavers, improving economy by streamlining resources, and using energy coming from renewables, together with lowering the greenhouse gas emissions by 20% (The European Commission 2018).

An important pillar of the Europe 2020 vision is education, alongside training, youth and sports, all covered by the Erasmus + program. Under its Key action 2 for “ sharing, developing and transferring innovative practices in education, training and youth provision between participating countries” (Erasmus+, 2018), the Spanish National Agency financed the training course named EducatiON LINE whose aim was to promote digital tools for education and to help youth workers become familiar with different online tools and how to use them effectively. The one-week course is part of a larger project called TURN Online, implemented by seven NGOs in six countries: iWith.org (Spain), GEYC (Romania), INPRO (Poland), Alternativi International (Bulgaria), PROJUVEN (Spain), Intermedia Knowledge Transfer (Greece) and Egyesek (Hungary). The goal of this project is to encourage youth organisations to use digital tools in their work so they be able to increase their digital footprint and attract a larger audience in the online space. Youth work aims at “safe premises and support for informal social and independent activities” , while digitalizing youth work makes “possible to reach more young people, it lowers young people’s threshold of participating and exerting influence and it provides easy-to-use channels for young people’s free-time pursuits and interaction” (Kiviniem and Tuominen, 2017, p. 18) The aim of the course was for participants to acquire knowledge about online tools, together with skills and confidence to develop e-learning courses on their own.

## 2.LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1.Social learning

Social learning theory points out that learning achieves value in a social environment, where experience and knowledge is shared among different people whose contexts intersect to create understanding and meaning. Meaning is created through practice in everyday life and is located in a process called by Etienne Wenger “the negotiation of meaning”, a transformative duality between participation (living and interacting in the world) and reification (creating artefacts) (Wenger 1999, 52). He proposed and developed the model of communities of practice (CoP) by joining the concepts of community - which is not new: people have been gathering into community for safety and food since the beginning of humanity - and practice: a shared interest, domain, repertoire (Wenger 1999, 2002; Wenger, Trayner and de Laat 2011). CoPs have three key components: domain, practice, and participants. CoPs are characterized by trust and engagement with the goal to improve learning and create value (Wenger, Trayner and de Laat 2011).

Originally based on the apprenticeship model (Lave 2002) where new-comers would enter the community at its periphery and move towards a more centric position while learning to speak the community idiom and gain expertise, thus using learning as an “evolving from of membership” (Lave 2002, 52), the CoP concept grew to encompass identity transformation and reconciliation, multimembership, boundary negotiation (Wenger 1999) and was used as framework for analysis in different areas of education (McDonald editor and Cater-Steel editor, 2017), health professionals (Andrew *et al.* 2009), business and management (Draper 2013).

As one of the key ingredients to make a viable CoP is building trust and personal relationships to develop practice and “craft intimacy” (Wenger 2002, 123), the model has mainly been used and investigated in face-to-face environments. With the rapid proliferation of digital technologies and social media (STATISTA - The Statistic Portal 2018) CoP is crossing into the online domain, connecting across geographies and creating networks which “constitute a new technological support for sociability”(Scherer Bassani 2011). In order to

connect to the online network to become part of the community and create a community of practice, participants need to learn how to use the tools available.

This paper argues that the participants in the training course displayed the characteristics of the second stage of CoP creation: “coalescing”, in which the group is exploring the domain and building trust, bouncing ideas and experiences off each other and discovering the benefits of mutual support. (Wenger 2002, 82–85). It is a fragile stage when individuals discover the value of collaborative enterprise and of pooling resources to achieve common goals.

## 2.2. Scaffolding and affordances

Bruner stipulated that learning is an active process in which learners build new meaning based on their existing knowledge. Social learning provides the scaffolding (Bakhurst and Shanker 2001) necessary to negotiate meaning and create value successfully.

The term “affordances” coined by Gibson will be used for the online tools that are both subject of the course and object of the final projects. In view of recent research, “extending the notion of affordances from ‘action possibilities’ to ‘transaction possibilities’ gives agency to both learner and technology, and recognises the important contribution of the digital environment to the learner experience” (Osborne 2014).

The researcher analyses the contribution that online affordances have in scaffolding the participants transition from users-apprentices to creators-teachers of online meaning. Besides using newly discovered applications to create online content based on personal ideas/experiences, the sharing of all course materials and information was done using social media, namely a Facebook group. This allowed a seamless blending between individuals and technology, allowing the participants to the full experience of the education act of the future,

### 2.3. Non-formal learning

The course was designed to respond to the need in a non-formal learning area, defined as intentional “learning embedded in planned activities that are not explicitly designated as learning, but which contain an important learning element.” (Colardyn and Bjornavold 2004, 71) Although formal and non-formal education have been designated as competing paradigms, research suggests they intertwine in most learning situations, in terms of processes, purposes, location, and content (Colley, Hodkinson and Malcolm 2002). With this in mind, the outcomes of the training described in the article are arguably applicable to any educational environment.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The paper used the researcher’s journal and observations, materials from the course, artefacts created during the exercises, feedback from the participants at the end of the training, and reflexive letters from participants and organisers after the group training was completed. The relevant information was analysed and compiled into a narrative aimed at conveying the experiences of the participants during the one-week training, with focus on collaborative learning. The narrative was considered the optimal choice to show the experiences of the course in the context in which they were created. Consequently, this article is structured as a sequential narrative to describe the participants’ gradual accumulation of knowledge about use of digital tools and to showcase the stages of community coalescing.

*“As human experiences that evolve over time, communities and networks have stories – how they started, what has happened since, what participants are trying to achieve. It is in the context of these narratives that one can appreciate what learning is taking place (or not) and what value is created (or not). Framing value creation through narratives emphasizes the importance of audience and perspective.” (Wenger, Trayner and de Laat 2011, 15).*

### 3.1 The training course

The training called EducatiON LINE aim was to promote digital tools for education, to help youth workers become familiar with different online tools and how to use them effectively.

#### 3.1.1 Location

The training took place in Hungary, at approximately 90 km from Budapest, in Holloko, where the participants enjoyed being in the middle of nature and, at the same time, being in close proximity to a medieval castle and a village declared UNESCO heritage site.

#### 3.1.2 Participants

Thirteen people, nine females and four males, from six countries - Hungary, Spain, Poland, Romania, Greece and Bulgaria - participated in the training. They varied in age (from twenty-two to thirty-eight) and experience, the common denominator being the fact that they worked with youth in different roles. (see Appendix 1)

## 4.DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The participants were selected by the sending organization based on their experience and connection to the field of youth education. Once the first phase was completed, the host organization in Spain, iWith, arranged a series of online interviews via Skype to assess the individual needs of the participants and to check availability for additional phases of the long-term project: blog, written guidelines.

This type of online introduction, through Skype, is used on regular bases to bridge individuals from different geographical locations working together on a project. The names were attached to faces and smiles and accents, and also allowed the organisers to assess some of the strengths and knowledge gaps the participants had related to the topic of the training. These first discussion were mentioned later in the course, letting the participants know the organisers paid attention to their needs, which created a sense of emotional comfort and connection.

#### 4.1. The training course

The introduction of the course and the presentation of the participants showed a very diverse group, with different levels of experience and multiple reasons for joining. From the crucible of initial intentions and hard work throughout the course, it would turn out to be an amazing sharing and bonding experience that touched upon the cultural identity of everyone present.

From the very beginning, the course introduced two free apps none of the participants has ever used before (Boomerang and ActionBound) , while also calling for group action and collaboration in the form of a game, in open air, hunting locations and performing joined tasks where imagination, coordination, and team work were necessary. Learning by doing in a competitive setting (there was a set time for the tasks) in mixed teams composed of people of different backgrounds and cultures, with different personalities (hence the competitive streak) encouraged the participants to discuss, argue, propose scenarios, play roles in the videos, assume roles in the groups, all while testing a new tool and competing against the others in a game. It was quickly obvious who was the “father” and “mother” of the group, who was the creative one, who kept the time, who fooled around, and who veered off track to play. All in good humour, the participants started to know each other in a work environment, began developing relationships that would lead to collaborative project at the end of the course.

The first step of the scaffolding process was made by showing affordances are easy and user-friendly, and they help create a space with laughter and goodwill.

During the next phases, each participant set their own personal goal which allowed them to focus on their individual journey. Both reflection on personal pursuits and exposure to online content in the form of trainings related to creating visual objects, using different types of online methods: Skype, YouTube, webinar, and MOOC afforded the participants the experience of different training material delivery methods. Sharing all feedback on the digital Pinup board created the visible digital context for collaboration, connection, and the potential of journey together, which is the first stage of community building (Wenger 2002).

With the experience of these different trainings and tools, the participants had different angles of performing online education and started a reflexive process on the quality of the education act that circled back to the vision and personal goals submitted previously. As a consequence, it helped enhance each participant's expertise on the course domain. Another side-effect was that raised some doubts on the level of expertise needed for the final projects: A, one of the volunteers from Macedonia, stated he was feeling "lost"; even if he considered himself a proficient social media user, the insight into the different affordances uncovered areas he was ignorant of. His comment triggered recognition of the same feelings for the majority of the participants, who admitted freely both their difficulties in searching and choosing adequate online tools, as well as hope and expectation these will be overcome in the next days.

During the second day of training, using the metaphor of an ocean and different type of e-learning as islands, the participants reflected on their personal understanding of the concept of online learning (or e-learning), as well as how to use digital tools in their local context, followed by testing and assessing six collaborative instruments: Kahoot, Google forms, Big Blue Button, Padlet, Edmodo, and Google Classroom.

The process was not without difficulties, as the participants discovered strengths and weakness of each tools, as well as the challenge of deciding which education context and audience are appropriate for each tool. A checklist named VERA

("Very Easy Review for Apps) was used to assess the various affordances. (Appendix 2). Although the majority of the features of each tool were user friendly, some (Padlet, Google Forms) were more intuitive than others, others (Big Blue Button, Kahoot) were more suitable for a specific activity (webinars, games), and some (Edmodo, Google classroom) required additional time allocated for learning.

Another challenge ensued at the time of explaining the applications to the group and having them go into the sites, logging in, and solving the proposed exercises. It became apparent that online students need to take extra time to access the online tools, to become familiar with the layout of the course, to test and troubleshoot the eventual errors, not accounting for technical difficulties or those related to Internet connection/ bandwidth. The testing and subsequent presentation gave the participants insight into the preparation time, skills, and patience needed to set up and facilitate online courses, in contrast with the face-to-face environment.

At this point in the course, the participants started connecting more, discussing projects and sharing personal information in the free time, as well bringing out their experiences and background during the activities and the debriefing sessions. Contrary opinions were also heard, particularly in understanding the meaning of the steps of the activities. The facilitators watched closely and intervened in the discussion, providing additional information and/or encouragement when necessary. The timing proved appropriate for introducing group dynamics: forming, storming, norming, and performing (Wilson 2010), as well as brainstorming within the group the skills of an online facilitator. The brainstorming allowed ideas to bounce off one another, reflecting back on the digital tools used now both from the perspective of a student and that of a facilitator, with concepts of engagement, assertiveness, presence, leadership, and organization skills (Savery 2010).

The third day involved learning about video making: how to use a camera, shooting angles, grammar of the video story. This time divided into four groups, the participants received the task of filming interviews or other activities. There were four videos on different topics at the end of the day: about the weather forecast, about a simple Bulgarian dance, how to jump over a table, and how to

play the wooden bricks game called “Jenga”. The raw material filmed was edited and participants learned from their mistakes about the grammar of the story, presenting a context, shooting from different angles, video editing. In discussing each video, the participants learned together, building new knowledge and extracting meaning from each other’s works. Personal preferences and feelings became visible on both sides of the camera; some participants voices their uncertainties in being on front of the camera, their discomfort at not knowing the answer to the questions or of being asked too personal a question, their lack of knowledge about shooting videos combined with their criticism at the end-results. Throughout the process, they asked for help and shared personal experiences, thus finding the “benefits of contributing and the value of learning from other[s]” (Wenger 2002, 86) which are indicative of the coalescing phase of CoP.

The fourth day began with a Moodle presentation, after which the participants split into groups to pursue individual projects. This time the split was voluntary, each person either presenting his/her own idea or joining an idea they felt they can contribute to. The next task was to write a plan, present it to the experts’ team (communication, video production and user testing), and plan around specialists, time and equipment resources to produce an e-learning course: film, edit and create online content, upload it to an online platform and present it to a peer audience, all in one day and a half. A checklist (Appendix 3) was developed to help the participants decide on a topic and choose the adequate affordance to present it.

Five very different projects were created and uploaded on the Facebook group to be assessed by the facilitators and the other participants at the end of day five. Despite all the challenges and the short time, the participants worked as a team to bring to life projects that reflected the character and passions of the facilitator and approached a large range of subjects and tools: a blog about intercultural exchanges and the refugee experience, a Parkour demonstration, a public speaking course, an introduction to ergonomics and a sexual awareness questionnaire.

#### 4.2. The coalescing of a CoP

Although only six countries were designated, in reality the number of nationalities was larger and each participant came from a very different background within their own country. English was the common language, although it was a foreign language to all the participants. Despite the initial hesitance and sometimes the need for translation, soon the group start acting cohesively, with a joint purpose.

MC expressed her feelings eloquently- “ For me is very difficult to be here...I don't like...for me it's very difficult to be here in front of the camera. I don't like...nothing and I am doing this...because...for my group.[...] we can talk about how to affront some difficult situations like this.[...] be here even if you want to run...this is my first experience...” Patience and connection, together with the safe environment created by trust, allowed MC to both express her fear and surpass it. She was very active during the presentation of the final projects, bringing examples of her own experience, both in Chile and Spain. She also shared her cultural shock when coming to live in Spain, despite the countries having a common spoken language. Embracing a different culture goes beyond the common language to shared stories and experiences. Creating a safe space to negotiate meaning and engage mutually in creating a shared repertory of stories and experiences (Wenger 1999) is the beginning of a CoP.

At a micro-level, the training course exhibited all the multicultural, multilanguage challenges apparent during the European integration processes. One of the final projects touched on a very sensitive theme: refugees. M from the Greek island of Chios recounted how she and her mother were walking one day and they found a woman and her baby nearly drowning by the beach. They brought them out of the water and took them in, offering some food and clothes, despite being aware they were breaking the law and authorities finding out about it would land them in jail or worse. MA from Spain added to the topic by talking about her volunteering in the refugee camps where basic human values would be challenged on a daily basis.

Every one of the five final projects was an individual idea worked on collectively by the group. During the five days of the course, the participants

shared stories on how “to be a volunteer in Palestine, how immigrant communities live in Greece, what prompted a young man from Kyrgyzstan to study in Europe, the passion for the Russian cuisine of an Italian young man who chose to go to a volunteer mission after finishing school, what are the working conditions and professional aspirations of a young midwife from Greece, how to radically change your life by choosing to live far away from your country, which were the disappointments of a young woman from Chile when she met the ‘European dream’” (TB from Romania). The awareness and respect born from the personal shared backgrounds of each participant give a measure of the close connections and trust achieved in the emerging community

This proves the participants were all very involved with their stories and put effort and personal experience to work to create a learning experience for the rest of the group. The facilitators were involved emotionally because the subjects they choose to present were close to their heart and the intention was to bring a change to the society they live in. Some subjects were raised from the conversation of the participants during free time or lunch, taking advantage of the diversity of the group not only in terms of nationality, but also in terms of age and experience. From the beginning, the participants became very close in a space of mutual respect and trust and were able to tap into each other’s lived experience to help with their chosen theme. While everyone was working on their own projects, some of the participants participated as guests on the other projects. No invitation was refused, and the comments indicated gratitude and desire to help, signaling trust and community coalescing (Wenger 2002). Furthermore, the realization of actual projects is another indication of a CoP: reification (Wenger 1999) in the form of online courses and additional documents. This required use of all the information and skills learned in the previous days, on top of personal creativity and collaboration. The group proved they learned and worked in collaboration successfully by using online tools to create artefacts, thus reifying the knowledge acquired through participation.

The feedback from the participants after the course revealed that “online tools, in the correct hands, can improve learning and be an opportunity” (MA from Spain); the new affordances “can really change the way we learn and the way

we connect” (KD from Greece), they are a means to “be connected with [*the refugees*] past life, with family and friends who are far away” (MA from Spain). In the newly created community of learning, the takeaway was information on “the tools needed to create an online course and to present to my students a different view of the course using online tools” (AP from Romania). Furthermore, the stories and experiences shared become the common language of the incipient CoP, even more than English, emphasizing the importance of learning as a community (Pausan 2019 under review). The sending organisations used blogs to disseminate the information about the course and its content, underlining that “digitalisation as of a process whose future is blooming in this century” and learning how to use the online tools and to have an active online presence contribute to “adaptability, as working with millennials involves constant change and innovation” (CL from Geyc Romania).

## 5.CONCLUSIONS

### 5.1.Limitations

The experience has been viewed through the eyes of the researcher, whose experience and bias may have affected the conclusions. To mitigate bias, peer debriefing and an external auditor (Creswell 2002) have been used. Another limitation is the fact that this was a one week only course, with a small number of participants. Another instance of the same training will occur later in 2018. It will be interesting to observe, analyse, and compare the second group’ s behaviour, as well the changes made by the host organization following the feedback of the participants, to the first iteration of the course.

### 5.2.Recommendations for further research

This research gives valuable input into the kind of courses the European program does support, with impact on the future of education. Although the

course is for non-formal education, the same conclusions apply both to formal and non-formal education: the future is digital.

### 5.3. Conclusion

The future is now and digital tools are part of the new wave of education. In order for organisations to be successful in their activities and reach a larger audience, they must use online tools effectively and create a coherent digital presence. The first step is to become familiar with these tools, to be able to match the corresponding tool to the participants' needs. Learning in a social context and sharing personal experiences and backgrounds gives participants a sense of trust, which helps build connections that in turn create a community of learning (a potential CoP), where members learn in collaboration and respect for each other, as well as for the outcome. This type of projects proves the value of creating a space for trust and respect where community begins to bud in the relationships that form naturally between the participants.

Moreover, it is a statement of the global community of learning forming around the Erasmus program, where people with similar interests engage together in a joint enterprise to gain new skills and embrace a shared repertoire (Wenger, 1999) within the European shared territory. The Erasmus framework enables and sustains a European CoP.

The Facebook group is still active to-date, an active link between participants of different ages, genders and cultures embracing multiculturalism and inclusion in both physical and virtual environments. Each participated had a personal contribution in writing for the TurnOnline blog and the guidelines on work with online tools.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The researcher would like to thank the organisers, especially iWith from Spain and its representative onsite AK, for their support and use of materials for the present article.

## REFERENCES

- Andrew, N. et al. 2009. "Developing professional identity in nursing academics: The role of communities of practice", *Nurse Education Today*. 29(6): 607–611. [https://doi: 10.1016/j.nedt.2009.01.012](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2009.01.012).
- Bakhurst, D. and Shanker, S. 2001. *Jerome Bruner: language, culture, self*. London: Sage.
- Colardyn, D. and Bjornavold, J. 2004. "Validation of Formal, Non-Formal and Informal Learning: policy and practices in EU Member States", *European Journal of Education*, 39(1), pp. 69–89. [https://doi: 10.1111/j.0141-8211.2004.00167.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0141-8211.2004.00167.x).
- Colley, H., Hodkinson, P. and Malcolm, J. 2002. *Non-formal learning: mapping the conceptual terrain. A Consultation Report*. Leeds: University of Leeds Lifelong Learning Institute. [http://www.infed.org/archives/e-texts/colley\\_informal\\_learning.htm](http://www.infed.org/archives/e-texts/colley_informal_learning.htm).
- Creswell, J. W. 2002. *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches*. London: SAGE.
- Draper, D. C. 2013. "The Instructional Effects of Knowledge-Based Community of Practice Learning Environment on Student Achievement and Knowledge Convergence". *Performance Improvement Quarterly*. 25(4):pp. 67–89.  
<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=shib,cookie,ip,url,uid&db=eric&AN=EJ996129&custid=s2888710>
- Erasmus+. 2018. *Programme Guide*. [https:// doi: 10.1109/CICEM.2013.6820130](https://doi.org/10.1109/CICEM.2013.6820130).

- Kiviniemi, J. and Tuominen, S. 2017. *Digital Youth Work - A Finnish Perspective*. 1st edn. Helsinki: Verke. [https:// doi: 10.1007/978-1-4419-6278-2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-6278-2).
- Lave, J. 2002. *Situated learning : legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- McDonald editor, J. and Cater-Steel editor, A. 2017. *Implementing communities of practice in higher education : dreamers and schemers*. Singapore, Singapore : Springer.
- Osborne, R. 2014. *An ecological approach to educational technology : affordance as a design tool for aligning pedagogy and technology*. Accessed on 31 July 2018. [https:// www.researchgate.net/profile/Richard\\_Osborne/publication/274635924\\_An\\_Ecological\\_Approach\\_to\\_Educational\\_Technology\\_Affordance\\_as\\_a\\_Design\\_Tool\\_for\\_Aligning\\_Pedagogy\\_and\\_Technology/links/552414d40cf22e181e738823/An-Ecological-Approach-to-Educational-Technology-Affordance-as-a-Design-Tool-for-Aligning-Pedagogy-and-Technology.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Richard_Osborne/publication/274635924_An_Ecological_Approach_to_Educational_Technology_Affordance_as_a_Design_Tool_for_Aligning_Pedagogy_and_Technology/links/552414d40cf22e181e738823/An-Ecological-Approach-to-Educational-Technology-Affordance-as-a-Design-Tool-for-Aligning-Pedagogy-and-Technology.pdf)
- Savery, J. R. 2010. "BE VOCAL: Characteristics of Successful Online Instructors", *Journal of Interactive Online Learning*, 9(2): 141–152. [http:// www.ncolr.org/jiol/issues/pdf/4.2.6.pdf](http://www.ncolr.org/jiol/issues/pdf/4.2.6.pdf).
- Scherer Bassani, P. B. 2011. "Interpersonal exchanges in discussion forums: A study of learning communities in distance learning settings". *Computers and Education. Elsevier Ltd*, 56(4): 931–938. [https://doi: 10.1016/j.compedu.2010.11.009](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2010.11.009).
- STATISTA - *The Statistic Portal 2018. Number of Facebook users worldwide 2008-2018 Statistic*. Accessed on 31 July 2018. [https:// www.statista.com/statistics/264810/number-of-monthly-active-facebook-users-worldwide/](https://www.statista.com/statistics/264810/number-of-monthly-active-facebook-users-worldwide/).
- The European Commission 2018 Europe 2020 strategy European Commission. Accessed on 16 August 2018. [https:// ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/framework/europe-2020-strategy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/framework/europe-2020-strategy_en).
- Wenger, E. 1999. *Communities of practice : learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Wenger, E. 2002 *Cultivating communities of practice a guide to managing knowledge*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Wenger, E., Trayner, B. and de Laat, M. 2011. *Promoting and assessing value creation in communities and networks: a conceptual framework*. April. Ruud de Moor Centrum. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0978-90-358-1808-8>.
- Wilson, C. 2010. *Bruce Tuckman's Forming, Storming, Norming & Performing: Team Development Model., Coaching Culture at work: 1-4*.

## Appendix 1

### List of participants (initials only)

Name	Gender	Age	Country	Background
AP	Female	39	Romania	Teacher/trainer
TB	Female	29	Romania (Moldova)*	Business management
SN	Male	18	Poland (Kyrgyzstan)*	Student (IT)
EJ	Female	25	Poland	student
KD	Male	26	Greece	physiotherapy
MS	Female	23	Greece	student
MA	Female	25	Spain	youth worker
MC	Female	35	Spain (Chile)*	youth worker
VI	Female	29	Bulgary	youth worker
RY	Female	28	Bulgary	psychologist
AL	Male	22	Macedonia	volunteer
MY	Female	22	Greece	volunteer
SP	Male	23	Italy	volunteer

\*nationality

Trainers/ facilitators onsite: MA, TM, VB - Hungary; AK - Spain; AN - Ukraine

## Appendix 2

VERA (Very Easy Review for Apps) **criteria** (developed by VB and Egyesek)

### 1 Name of the App or Platform

### 2 What's the Aim or Purpose of the App or Platform?

### 3 Overall, how do you rate the user-friendliness of the App or Platform?

*Very Unfriendly | Manageable | Easy | It's a pleasure*

### 4 How much does it cost? How do you evaluate the price/benefit ratio?

### 5 User Experience

How do you feel while using it? What are your impressions?

**Suggestions:**

Intuitive | Clumsy | Smooth | Chunky | Hard | Easy as Checkers | Fun | Confusing | Complex | Disappointing | Amazing | etc. | etc. | etc.

Describe your experience with this app in *a few words*.

**6 Technical Difficulties**

What problems could happen? What problems are you having with this app or platform?

--

**7 Time**

*What are your observations about **time**? Does it feel like a long time to explore this app? How long would it take to create quality content for this platform? Any other comments?*

--

**8 Content & Target Group**

Who could use this app or platform? What kind of content can it be used for? What type of content works BEST on this app or platform? Is there content that You could imagine using with this app or platform?

--