

PARTICIPATORY AND CONSTRUCTIVISTIC EVALUATION OF ELEARNING QUALITY: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

The ongoing discussion on the issue of the quality of academic eLearning criticizes the dominating culture of “quality” linked to the industrial production, mostly based on rationalization and conformity to pre-defined standards, that requires the collection of massive quantitative data, with major interest on educational outputs as a vision of system’s productivity (Ehlers & Schneckenberg, 2010, Ghislandi, 2008, 2012).

Instead, quality of education requires reflection and deep understanding of complex contextual elements, interactions and relational dimensions that are essential and often invisible to traditional assessment tools. In this paper, through the presentation of an eLearning course as case study, we attempt to show how participatory/constructivist evaluation can become a key practice to support the quality of an eLearning experience from the point of view of the learner. In fact, as it emerges from the analysis, this open form of evaluation has an enormous potential to address practices towards the values/concepts underlying meaning making processes inside a transformative learning culture. Building on these results, we contend that the evaluation of quality needs to integrate methods that open up the sense of practices and values to the participant.

To this regard, we also discuss how qualitative constructivist approaches to evaluation can make an important contribution drawing on the coherence found between its epistemological and ontological assumptions and the idea of new cultures of quality evaluation where the participants build the own values and concepts of goodness.