Collaborative learning and Information Literacy: a proposal

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What is collaborative learning?

Is a learning method that uses social interaction as a means of knowledge building.

Features:
- Inter-human communication.
- Knowledge can be shared and co-constructed.
- Joint construction of products.
- Groups assume almost total responsibility.
Collaborative Learning

Three main attributes:
1. Interdependence: learners work towards the common goal; share information/knowledge and test ideas.
2. Synthesis of information: each group creates a product that is distinct from the individual contributions of the group members.
3. Independence: of the instructor.
Online Collaborative Learning

Features:

- A large amount of information can be accessed easily.
- Allows verbal and nonverbal interaction.
- Learning support “any time, any where.”

Efficient - situations where individuals have to solve a problem together
Communities of practice (CoPs)

A group of people:
- Engage in a process of collaborative social learning.
- Share a concern of interest for something they do (domain of interest).
- Learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.
- Interact in an ongoing basis.
- Develop a sense of belonging.
Online Community of Practice for Information Literacy

Common domain of interest: efficient use of information
Online Community of Practice for Information Literacy (OCoPIL)

Features:

- Technology infrastructures have to be created.
- Communication is computer mediated.
- Membership is usually open.
- Go beyond traditional ‘one-shot’ and ‘face-to-face’ models.
- Expert-novice learning strategy.
Online Community of Practice for Information Literacy

OCoPiL Benefits:

- Helps to build a common language about information: definitions; types; and ways to use.
- Increases access to information.
- Connects users with a common interest.
- Supports faster problem solving.
- Helps individuals do their activities related with information use.
Online Community of Practice for Information Literacy (OCoPIL)

Learning strategies for OCoPIL:

- Virtual learning environment (VLE).
- Links to other community-related sites or content sources.
- Real-time collaborative sessions.
- Discussion forums.
- Captured experiences from expert users or librarians.
- Email-based expert access/question-and-answer system.
Online Community of Practice (OCoPIL) for Information Literacy

Examples:

Professional level:
- Talking Heads and Virtual Heads.
- Project CoPILOT, UK: Community of Practice for Information Literacy Online Teaching.

User communities:
- Community of public libraries.
- Employees of different organizations.
- Virtual users.
Online Community of Practice for Information Literacy

Planning the OCoPIL:

- Online weekly meetings.
- Group members would select a new theme to review.
- Online sessions to demonstrate and discuss its effective use.
- The experts commit to explore the information resource over the next week.
- Participants would report back at the next meeting on its ease of use and applicability.
Online Community of Practice for Information Literacy

Information and Communication Technologies:
- E-learning software.
- Social Networks.
- Instant messaging.
Conclusions

- Information professionals need to design another kind of IL programs.
- We must think about people who cannot learn face-to-face or in individual mode: elderly people; housewives; professionals.
- The best option is Online Community of Practice for Information Literacy.