An Enactivist Approach to Web-based Learning:
Live Campus as a Proposal for a Learning Environment

Giuseppe De Simone, University of Salerno, Salerno, Italy
Diana Carmela Di Gennaro, University of Salerno, Salerno, Italy
Riccardo Fragnito, Pegaso Telematics University, Naples, Italy

ABSTRACT

In the Web-based learning era, the possibility to use the online network for learning activities, studies and research has brought about a revolution in the educational processes and the emergence of a new culture characterized by the idea that knowledge is not closed and defined, but open and accessible to all. Within a perspective in which knowledge is generated by the interaction of the individual with the environment, the socio-constructivist approach paved the way to new theoretical frameworks that, starting from the social dimension of learning, acknowledge and embrace the biological aspects of learning processes, thus offering interesting reflections on the web-learning phenomenon. Stemming from these assumptions, LiveCampus was created; a social learning environment aimed at fostering a synergistic integration between the dimensions of formal and informal knowledge.

Keywords: Enactivism, Learning Environment, Socio-Constructivism, Web-based Learning

INTRODUCTION

The latest Censis/UCSI report on communication entitled “The media is us. The beginning of the biomediatic era” (2012) provides the findings related to media consumption, measured over a decade of evolution and analysis of the transformations occurred in the media ‘diets’ of the Italians.

As highlighted in the introduction to the report, the main results of this study show that the remarkable development of the Internet, due to both the expansion of the geographic coverage with the resulting increase of connected users, and the proliferation of applications (social tools, cloud computing) of web 2.0, social networks as well as the miniaturization of hardware de-
vices and the proliferation of mobile connections have emphasized the primacy of the individual (Censis/UCSI, 2012).

The same document stressed that the individual is reflected in the media in the content created by the individual himself, who is also the producer. It is us who build our personal media schedules, tailored according to our needs and preferences, continually create digital contents, thanks to the Internet, which makes it available in a variety of ways. The self-production of content on the web favors mostly the enactment of the self: the user is the content. The spread of the app for smartphones and cloud computing reinforce the focus on the individual in the media system. Machines are becoming smaller and all the more portable, practically becoming an appendage of the body: an extension that adds to its functions, it enhances the capabilities, facilitates expression and relationships, thus leading to a new phase. It is the biomedia era in which the virtual transcription and the sharing of electronic personal biographies become central\(^3\).

Every day millions of posts are published; it is estimated that there are over 145 million networks of blogs, over 200 million tweets are written, 1152 hours of video uploaded on YouTube and 4.5 million photos on Flickr are published. Overwhelmed by this flow of information, we spend our days working through the screens of posts to read, emails to open and newsletters to view. Our friends and people that we follow on the various social networks submerge us with updates on their lives and various links: potentially each of these opens another set of links to explore, and urges us to join in another newsletter, another blog, another Facebook page, which are new flows of information to be processed every day.

Faced with this situation, many react by multiplying their efforts to keep up with everything, or, conversely, closing their shutters and retreating into a voluntary ignorance: both behaviors, if on the one hand are humanly understandable, on the other hand lead to risks or side effects\(^4\).

In the wake of the new tools offered by Web 2.0, with the enhancement of the network as a field of the development of social networking, it is possible to imagine new media consumption scenarios that favor the dialectic relationship, sometimes antithetical\(^5\), between formal / informal, artificial / natural, platform / network / study work, personal / social, size.

To use the contemporary resources with full awareness and address the complexity of society, it is no longer enough to be skilled in literacy and numeracy, but acquire critical and creative thinking skills to filter and understand media messages\(^6\).

**WEB-BASED LEARNING: FROM THE SOCIO-CONSTRUCTIVIST TO THE ENACTIVIST APPROACH**

In the web-based learning era, the possibility to use the network for learning activities, studies and research enabled the learner to be the protagonist of his/her own cultural growth in the so-called Web 2.0, which is now considered a social context in which everyone can express themselves through different languages and can access information and communicate across time and space boundaries. This has brought about a revolution in the educational processes and the emergence of a new culture characterized by the idea that knowledge is not closed and defined, but open and accessible to all, within the perspective of a shared and participated knowledge (Falcinelli, 2012).

This scenario has consequently required a rethinking of the teaching-learning process with the aim of a knowledge construction that can be socially shared, participated and reticular and in which the learner can be the protagonist and co-creator of knowledge processes.

Since Web learning represents a participatory and collaborative learning approach, allowing learners’ connection and social interaction, it is necessary to reflect on the potential of social networking in order to reduce the gap between the traditional “formalized interactions” that oc-
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