

Digital Learning: a Breakthrough for Low-skilled Adults

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Abstract

Adult education in The Netherlands shows a new kind of evolution: digital learning for the low-skilled adults makes sense. 'Digital learning is as easy as ordering a pizza.' With the portal Oefenen.nl Stichting Expertisecentrum ETV.nl (ETV.nl) is dedicated to improve basic skills of low-educated learners with multi media exercises. The total number of accounts is over 1,4 billion, of which 127 thousand first registered in 2012. They appreciate the portal with an average of 8,2. A considerable number of these users are low-educated learners. They try to improve their basic skills via digital learning so they can improve their place in society or even move on to a training course or (other) work. Training materials for digital learning have also been developed in other countries. Research shows that digital learning can be successful. Digital learning for low-skilled people has become a permanent fixture in our society. It achieves a breakthrough for a large group of people. It is one of the most desirable forms for low-skilled individuals to acquire basic skills, so they don't have to show in public that they have a low literacy level or poor numeracy skills. Research for ETV.nl on the experiences of people with low literacy levels and teachers with the programme 'Read and Write! Language at your workplace' shows that digital learning for this group has a motivating effect and is successful. So its validity is present. One of the most notable results is that the low-skilled users attach great value to self-guidance. The majority indicates that they prefer to learn on their own at home. This does not mean that mentoring is unnecessary, but it can also be distance mentoring. Most low-skilled participants need both a mentor and an expert. The skills required to do this are a blend of professional, didactic and educational abilities. During a study, these skills were presented to current mentors and a skills profile was documented. ETV.nl puts this into practice. ETV.nl focuses on educational institutions (especially Regional Training Centres for Secondary Vocational Training), public organisations, employers and line organisations. The last decade ETV.nl placed digital learning for low-educated learners on the map in Holland. Language is the common theme running through all the training programs. The language programmes are the most commonly used and very popular. This is true of both reading and writing programmes and vocabulary programmes for second language learners. The materials are developed for individual use. The monitoring system makes it possible for organisations to communicate with participants, to set up homework and to follow their results. This way it is possible to use the materials as a method in a course. New in 2013 is the method NLvaardig. The learner does most of the learning online. A professional teacher supports him, mostly online. A volunteer supports the learner in his own environment. In the presentation we concentrate on how Oefenen.nl works out in everyday life. We demonstrate the different functions of the portal and especially NLvaardig.