

E-Learning Tools in Non-formal Education Environments

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Abstract

The use of e-Learning is a common practice in school and university environments nowadays. Therefore people who still visit schools and universities are somehow used to multimedia technologies and the Internet as a means of improving and facilitating their learning. The same is not true for people that have already left school or finished university. Some of them feel even uncomfortable in e-Learning scenarios. The situation outlined here can be applied to language courses in private schools and institutes where participants are adults and young adults. Although they recognize that online learning tools can facilitate and improve the pace of their learning process, they seem not to make use of it. This paper consists of a threefold focus. First, it examines the introduction and use of e-Learning tools in classes of Portuguese as a foreign language. During a month, synchronous and asynchronous online activities were offered to two groups of 7 students each as a substitution and complement of the regular presential classes. The main objective was to motivate the students to adopt those e-Learning tools and incorporate them on their learning. Further, students should feel more confident with the language and be able to manage their learning inside and outside the classroom. Second, it will highlight the advantages of incorporating e-Learning tools specifically in the teaching of Portuguese. The third focus lay on the possible difficulties to adopt and implement online tools outside school and university environments. Implications of the results for teaching and learning in non-formal education will be offered.