

Quality, that complex issue: collaborative design for quality networked learning in HE.

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Abstract

Taking into consideration the definition of networked learning (NWL), quality teaching in HE (HE) should be achieved by promoting collaborative and interconnected learning in technologically enhanced learning environments. However, in HE, there is still a long way to go in order to implement quality NWL, as part of a broader picture of quality teaching in HE. Factors linked to this problem are the current institutional culture in HE, that privileges attention on research more than on pedagogical practices; leading to naïf pedagogical interventions based on the academics conceptions of good teaching, frequently linked to traditional approaches. In this article the authors contend that to promote quality NWL as part of quality teaching, collaborative design for learning represents an effective strategy. A case study is introduced, where collaborative processes of designing for learning are explored; specifically, the interactions between the members of an academic staff to improve a blended course, as re-design operation, are analyzed. In such process, the academics negotiate values attached to the pedagogical practices and assumptions about good teaching, as well as the role of NWL within it. In fact, collaboration triggered a number of discussions as part of negotiating the own quality perspective on pedagogical practices including NWL towards integrated, expanded quality perspective that supports academics engagement within a quality culture.

Keywords

HE, Learning Design, Collaborative Design, Quality, Networked Learning.

Introduction

Pedagogical research regarding teaching and learning in Higher Education (HE) has led to a number of assumptions that support a vision of educational quality that includes the adoption of networked learning (NWL) approaches (Ramsden, 1992; Laurillard, 1993; Laurillard, 2012). The more recent teaching and learning paradigms in HE imply consistent changes to the traditional approach based on lecturing. Active, participatory and collaborative learning experiences, based on authentic tasks like projects' implementation or inquiry, with the use of several sources of information leading to independent learning, are the key elements of a learner-centered approach, proven to be effective at the time of generating key competences for lifelong learning. (Mac Aleese et al., 2013) . Connected to this, the use of ICTs has been considered an excellent driver of effective teaching and learning; however, recently it has been demonstrated that the use of technologies in HE is still superficial, with most approaches relating to the delivery of digital contents, mirroring the traditional pedagogies with the use of the technological component (Laurillard, op.cit; Beetham & Sharpe, 2013).

The notion of NWL provides us a good starting point to analyze the quality of teaching and learning that integrates technologies as key component. In fact, the concept of NWL encompasses the idea of connection between learning communities and resources, by enhancing information and communication technologies (Goodyear et al. 2004). This concept goes far beyond the access to virtual learning spaces, resources, or facilities provided by technologies to improve communication. Based on the belief that learning is a social practice, this concept implies participation and transformation of reality (Jones, 2008). It can be assumed that NWL is not an individual process, but a joint activity carried out through connectedness (Zenios & Goodyear, 2008). We can conclude that quality NWL should then encompass the possibility to make significant

connections amongst participants and significant resources based on the adoption of significant technologies. We mean significant as the ones that the learner can appropriate of, as part of a learner centered approach. In 2010, after 8 years of the introduction of the eQuality for networked E-learning concept (e-Quality Network, 2002) Beaty, Cousin and Hogdson introduced the discussion about the "eQuality" of NWL in HE; they highlighted that a NWL policy should be based on explicit educational values and theory., in a context where it was difficult to mainstream NWL practices. The authors in fact claimed that: "the time is right to simply use the term NWL and drop the 'e' in networked e-learning. This is because we think it is more important to foreground connectivity as a specific and important pedagogical feature of NWL. We claim that an updated definition of NWL should not only refer to being a pedagogy based on connectivity and the co-production of knowledge but also one that aspires to support e-quality of opportunity and include reference to the importance of relational dialogue and critical reflexivity in all of this" (Beaty et al, p.585). An important emerging topic for the NWL movement was also the need of designing for learning; in fact, NWL is to be considered a complex practice, requiring design interventions to structure ill-defined (in the sense of new, unknown) educational situations (Laurillard & Mc. Andrew, 2002; Goodyear, Avgeriou, Baggetun, Bartoluzzi, Retalis, Ronteltap & Rusman, 2004). Recently, it was also considered that NWL is to be analyzed not as a single learner phenomenon, but as a multi-level (macro-meso-micro) where the learning culture has profound impacts (Dircking Homfeld, Jones & Lindstrom, 2009)

In sum, Beaty and colleagues add to the issue of connectedness and enhancement of technological resources, the relational dialogue and critical reflexivity concepts; while Laurillard & Mc Andrew, as well as Goodyear and colleagues introduced the important issue of designing for (networked) learning ; and finally Dircking-Homfeld and colleagues allowed us to understand the importance of contextualizing NWL as a learning culture, to achieve quality NWL.

However, "eQuality" seems still today difficult to achieve as real practice. Why is it still so difficult to think about NWL as part of HE?

Overall, quality teaching with the use of technologies is not rewarded at an institutional level, pushing the interest of scholars away from teaching to focus on research as primary field of professional development (Boyer, 1997, MacAleese et al., op.cit.). As a result, professional development to acquire pedagogical skills, as well as spaces for reflection on innovative teaching are uncommon, leading to naive pedagogical practices, attached to traditional conceptions and personal experiences. Furthermore very few professors apply evidence based criteria to teaching (Hakel & Halpern, 2002; Austin, Sorcinelli and McDaniels, 2007). While it is difficult to intervene on the hard elements linked to the policy and institutional context (rewards and professional development opportunities to focus pedagogical innovations including the adoption of NWL approaches) the soft elements (teachers' beliefs and reflection on the own approach to teaching) require types of intervention that go beyond "informing" on quality practices, even research-based information (Rienties, Brouwer, Lygo-Baker, 2013).

An approach to get quality NWL: the mediated quality

The specific NWL theory and practice debate puts the basis to define NWL eQuality. However, it is necessary to find out strategies to promote eQuality, as said earlier, for just informing does not cause significant shifts. In fact, from the very beginning of eLearning, there have been several approaches to define its quality (Ghislandi, Raffaghelli, Yang, 2013). It is worth to mention here the EFQUEL (European Framework for Quality of ELearning) model, which emphasizes the notion of quality as a participatory process, where the learners and users' vision is fundamental(EFQUEL, 2007); in fact, they should take part on dialogue within an organizational and learning process that supports the professionalization of stakeholders for quality (Auvinen & Ehlers, 2007)... While the term "eLearning" is still adopted by EFQUEL, the notion promoted is that of a contextualized, collaborative and interconnected approach that can be connected to the NWL definition discussed in the previous paragraph. In our own research activity we translated this into the notion of "mediated quality": that is, the implementation of processes that allow stakeholders to negotiate the different values and perceptions about quality co-existing within a learning culture, with the support of conceptual and instrumental tools across NWL experiences (Ghislandi et al, op.cit). Basing on Ehlers proposal on quality culture (values, symbols, heroes and rituals linked to the idea of quality) and its subsidiary concept of professionalization for quality (that is understanding and participating in a culture of quality) in our research we took into consideration the socio-constructivist meaning of the term mediation (Wertsch, 2007) as approach that implies offering tools that would support the processes of professionalization... According to this theoretical reference, mediation could encompass a (professional) learning process where stakeholders are guided across the "zone of

proximal development" (Vygotskij, 1978), from an initial position (i.e. outsiders of quality) to a new position (as insiders of quality or active agents of change). The process of mediation is hence composed by specific actions providing tools and support to a) know/understand quality principles; b) experience principles in the own practice; c) analyze/reflect on quality through the process of implementation; d) improve/innovate the own practices according to the quality principles. The approach is contextual and based on the type of professional/institutional practices within the learning culture.

In this article we contend that a strategy to promote quality NWL as part of a broader vision of NWL emerges from a process of collaboration for learning design. This last process becomes the base to think about NWL going beyond simplistic use of technologies. Within this collaborative process the academic staff: a) improve their knowledge/understanding quality NWL in a broader context of quality teaching; b) experience the new quality principles; c) analyze/reflect on the quality achieved d) implement concrete innovations to the own practices according to the achieved quality principles. But, why could we consider Collaborative Learning design a process of mediation for quality? Let's explore this issue in the next paragraph.

Collaborative Learning Design as a process of quality mediation

The Learning design practice encompass some necessary steps that underpin this "travel across the zone of proximal development": understanding and formulating principles of learning, implementing them, analyzing their effectiveness and formulating/representing systematically the innovations to adopt it in the future (Conole, 2012). As participants-led process, it implies a deep and significant effort that may encompass significant changes in the professional values supporting practices, hence promoting the shift from a position as outsider of quality to become insider of a quality system. Another issue is that Learning Design has been frequently associated with the teacher as reflective "solo player"; however, the reality is that designing (in the general sense of the term, in areas such as engineering and architecture) is a social process (Cross, 2010). In the educational field, some researchers have also highlighted the social nature of designing, where communication within a process of joint, collaborative problem solving is the key (Cox & Osguthorpe, 2003). Furthermore, team design communication patterns have been identified (Rapanta et. al 2013). This approach aligns with the extensively documented issue of teachers' professionalism; according to it professional learning and development occurs in collaborative networks (Hanraets, Hulsebosch & de Laat 2011) while facing professional problems to solve. From the other, as Laurillard puts (2012, op.cit), the teachers' professional learning occurs through a design thinking approach to teaching, that exposes the teachers to educational problems and processes of planning, creation of solutions, implementation and reflection.

Our attempt is to show how the collaborative learning design, based on the principles of design thinking (structuring ill-defined educational problems) works as instrument of mediation, letting the values attached to the pedagogical practices and assumptions to be negotiated towards the improvement of quality in NWL.

Methodological approach: A teachers-led inquiry process

Having conceptualized our approach to quality in NWL, we attempted to explore one of the perspectives of quality analysis: teachers' collaborative design for learning. Furthermore, we focused the level of intervention on a blended course quality. Our guiding research question was: Can collaborative learning design mediate the process of achieving quality pedagogical practices that include NWL as key dimension?

Based on a qualitative epistemological framework, the methodological approach chosen was that of the teacher-led inquiry, which is a new perspective in the processes of research on teaching. The teachers-led inquiry is an approach that relates learning design, teaching as design science (Laurillard, op.cit) and a self-conducted process of inquiry where the same teacher/trainer/academic staff reflects on the effectiveness of innovations introduced as a result of the learning design. (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2003).

The elements of our teacher-led inquiry were:

a) The problem requiring a design-thinking approach: the quality of the learning design for a HE course, which was based on a face-to-face approach for 3 editions, and was in the process of being transformed into a blended course with an important percentage of NWL activities envisaged in the new approach.

b) The context of intervention: temporal, spatial and cultural coordinates of the unit being analyzed, that is, a study along 3 months of time (from September to December 2012) about Department of Psychology and Cognitive Sciences (DIPSCO) from the University of Trento (North Italy), with its specific activity and learning culture. It is crucial to mention here that the DIPSCO is struggling to have a quality approach according to the ongoing national trends in general, and the value of the degrees delivered; this leads to

somehow rigid discourses with regard to contents taught and the curriculum. In order to improve the quality of the curriculum the DIPSCO has focused research productivity and research-based teaching. In spite of a convinced institutional support to adopting educational technologies, the use of them is still in its early stages with many controversies arisen (Ghislandi & Raffaghelli, 2012). In this context, the research unit devoted the energies to analyze how quality of eLearning is introduced in the changing institutional context of HE, through a participatory, design-based research.

c) The participants of this study: they were 5 integrants of an academic team implementing an undergraduate course. The team was composed by two professors, two eTutors and an instructional designer. The aim of the group was re-designing an already implemented course in search for improvements regarding the prior edition. One of the most important characteristics regarding the team was the diversity of professional profiles and roles played in the process of designing for learning, representing different perspectives of quality in HE. In the “results” section, the profiles are further described.

The body of data collected was composed by several types of data:

- 4 audiotaped and 1 videotaped working session. The sessions were aimed at discussing and advancing in the process of learning design. The components of the team were not always present during the sessions; the two professors responsible for the course (co-teaching) were present in 1 audiotaped and in the only videotaped session. The rest of meetings were done between the instructional designer and one of the professors.
- 201 email exchanges within the working team.
- 5 memos written by the instructional designer accompanying the process of learning design, after every session.

The data, collected in Italian, was transcribed and a thematic analysis was applied in the same language. Within this, the discourse in the texts was codified and organized in four groups/categories consisting in the four quality dimensions established as part of the process of mediation: a) understanding, b) creating/adopting tools, c) reflecting, d) innovating for quality. A member-check analysis of the results was done inviting some of the team members to search for the coherence/adjustment of the themes/strings of discourse selected with the categories. Later on, for the purposes of this article, the excerpts of discourse were translated into English.

Results: The mediated quality implemented

As explained in the section above, the team was composed by five members playing different roles. However, the most important interactions had place between the two professors, responsible for the content and the pedagogical approach of the course.

The roles, used later to codify the discourse, as well as the motivations to collaborate during the first and second editions of the course are described as follows:

Role and Code ID	Motivation for Collaboration: First course	Motivation for Collaboration: Second course
[P1] Professor 1 was the expert in the content	Implement a collaborative learning approach with the adoption of a blended solution, to enrich the teaching of the own discipline. Interest in understanding the differences in quality in terms of learning effectiveness and learning outcomes	Interest in improving the quality of multimedia and written contents, considering that the field of knowledge taught is in its initial phase of development in the national context and there is a need of divulgative/teaching resources in the Italian language.
[P2] Professor 2 was the expert in learning design, and eLearning	Commitment with design-based approach to improve course quality. Interest in implementing the initial eLearning course was to apply a collaborative approach for a field of teaching different of the own field of research and teaching, supporting the introduction of innovative pedagogical approaches within undergraduate courses	Interest in refining the pedagogical approach. Interest in systematizing pedagogical elements that could be applied to further eLearning courses in the field of knowledge taught.

[eT1] eTutor 1 was responsible for communications and students' guidance during eLearning activities. He was expert in the content/knowledge taught.	Assisting P1 in the development of a blended course innovating the way of teaching the discipline	Assisting P1 in the improvement of communication regarding the subject taught.
[eT2] eTutor 2 was responsible for introducing students to the NWL approach, adopting technological tools like wiki and video/audio recording, as well as collaborative learning environments	Assisting P2 in the implementation of innovations regarding the NWL approach.	Assisting P2 in improving/refining the blended learning approach.
[ID] Instructional Designer was responsible for giving feed-back regarding the process of learning design and design-based research, assisting P2.	Understanding the results of the first course to support new learning design.	Understanding the collaborative processes of learning design in order to feed-back P1 and P2 for quality reflections.

Table 1 – Participants, roles and motivations to participate in the process of collaborative learning design

As it is possible to see from the table 1 above, the main interests driving the team collaboration were to do adjustments to improve the quality of an already established course. In sum, the issues raised by the team regarding the own perception of quality are presented in the Table 2, below. We linked them to the NWL principles for quality.

Quality Issues as perceived by the team	Networked Learning principles for quality
Contents of the course: the problems expressed by the students regarding a "too fluid" "vast" "contradictory" content, and not easy to match with the own professional profile	Significant contents to interact/connect with
The translation of lab activities from a highly face-to-face approach to a blended system	Significant technologies to interact/connect with
Yielding a process of collaboration as part of the re-design of the course	A dialogic, critical and reflective perspective of learning
Examinations: A concern on the way grades are attributed that fairly reflects the essential knowledge the students must display after having attended the course, as well as the skills developed through collaboration and participation. If there is a quality value within design, the examination system must show to which extent this has been covered.	The institutional perspective, relating the classroom practice with the curriculum and the learners' profile after concluded the course.
Interdisciplinary collaboration between P1 and P2, within a team were eT1 and eT2 played crucial roles in defining and supporting operationally the decisions taken by P1 and P2; while ID supported P2 in the analysis of the whole process of teacher-led inquiry	(Collaborative) Designing for (networked) learning

Table 2- Networked Learning principles for quality

In the next section we introduce the process of mediation, represented through some excerpts of discourse taken from team design "conversations" (synchronous exchanges during design sessions, as well as asynchronous exchanges by email). The discourse selected relates to the dimensions of the process of mediation and within it, the issues regarding quality networked learning.

A- Understanding Quality within the course: the design challenge

In this phase the participants could be said "outsiders", at the beginning of their travel across the zone of proximal (professional) development, and the negotiation on the principles of quality begin. . The following

quotations indicate the initial concern on need of giving sense to the course in the context of the career and institutional culture, and what to do with the NWL approach, that could risk more resistance from the students:

“I’m concerned about the number of rejected students the last year, when we implemented the first blended course...This course was based in 3 years of prior experience of mine on the topic: so it “inherited” my work on the refinement of contents; as well as P2 NWL approach...but we have to adjust many issues...” (Session 1/P1: COD3) “Then I saw that the number of rejected was within 30%, as in other university courses. Yet I believe there are issues to improve since the course is still an hybrid between your and my type of teaching approaches” (Session 1/P1: COD4)

This initial issue was put in tension with the need of generating simpler and significant contents, by P2. “I think there are topics that require a glossary, clear definitions of concepts and terms for the students. I know I could be schematic but we need to underpin key concepts, since this is a very difficult course in our institutional context” (Session 1/P2: COD7)

The intervention of ID followed by P2 is clearly highlighting a term of negotiation:

“So you are saying that the sense of the course is not well understood by many students...” (Session 1/ID: COD8)

“...the other epistemological approach prevails and I can see many students have prejudices about this field of research” (Session 1/P2:COD9)

These sequences of interaction lead to a point where P1 comes to re-think the own criteria of quality of the contents.

“they (students) simply don’t see the type of skills they can achieve...” (Session 1/P1:COD11)

However, it is also crucial for the team to discuss about the use of technologies and the collaborative approach as part of the re-design of the course. The group spent an important part of the first design session to understand the type of contents and how the content of learning to learn through the NWL approach was to be delivered. As we could see, there was another tension between the envisioned process emerging:

“this module on NWL can be confusing, for there are other completely different laboratorial activities relating to the specific content, this is on the process, not the content...but I agree that students wouldn’t understand the value of collaborating without it” (Session 1/P2:COD23)

The group achieve information about the key issues requiring to be reshaped to achieve quality. In fact, the above mentioned tensions lead the group to deepen on the structure of contents and the way to improve the course delivery through a blended and networked learning approach. This is accompanied sudden with the adoption of tools to support the re-design, which is part of the second dimension of the process of mediation.

B- Experiencing quality principles: the tools for achieving quality.

We can see in this section some of the tools that have been adopted by the team to support the learning design process. This dimension is clearly represented by the interest of P2 to provide concrete "cues" to underpin ideas about the new design and prompt the following actions of design (and further teaching); this is followed by the requests of clarification by ID to understand the role of the tools in the process.

“I can prepare the course schedule and the syllabus, so we can understand where do you intervene. I need you to focus some topics that are in tight connection with your discipline, while there are other that I think is better I take over...” (Session1/P2:COD41)

“So the syllabus, that you have to prepare for the students, crystallizes all your process of negotiation of contents and pedagogical approach” (Session 1/ID:COD46)

The issue of reflective interaction through collaboration within the pedagogical perspective of the course is highlighted by eT2, which has interpreted the requests of P1 and P2 on the initial content for learning to learn with NWL, proposing a set of presentations as tools to introduce NWL more clearly:

“I simplified the NWL approach module; I removed the issue of the video presentation, and prepared a simplified presentation for the adoption of collaborative forum...Guess this is the minimum for the proposed collaborative approach” (Mail123/eT2)

Another simple tool regards the issue of evaluation:

“I prepared a table with the division of roles for the evaluation, since we are three people working together, apart eT2 that was with us initially” (Mail137/P2)

These are examples of very simple tools adopted not only to "anchor" the creative process, but also to represent it, making visible to the whole team the sense and the direction of the negotiation within the re-design of the course. This idea of representing leads to the dimension of "reflection".

C-Reflecting on the quality achieved: the process for quality.

Reflection regarded in this case mainly how the initial problems for the design were adjusted. This clearly starts with P2 efforts to represent the whole process looking back at the decisions negotiated and taken:

“here is the tank of instruments we are about to use. Guess it reflects our conversations and last changes to the current design” (Mail3/P2)

This is followed, in the 3rd Session of design by the reflection on the impact of the new approach in spite of the institutional context:

“In this new plan we solved the problem of a balance between the NWL approach and the contents; however the raise of numbers of students is a variable we cannot adjust and the laboratorial and collaborative approach depend highly on this” (Session3/P1:COD16)

The reflections lead to foresee the opportunities for innovation, as we introduce in the following paragraph.

D- Concrete innovations to the own pedagogical practices for quality: the impact of collaborative learning design

The end of the process of mediation, where the participants have "crossed" the zone of proximal development, shows how they start to think on the innovations made to keep improving the quality of the own practice. Firstly, it is to be highlighted the way in which eT1 and P1 integrated the idea of authentic collaboration as part of the quality perspective on the pedagogical approach. Initially, it was the concern of P2, but it has been negotiated and achieved.

“I can see the groups are quickly entering in the collaborative process for the first module. I guess how it will be for the Module 7, where we have a lot of practice...” (Mail107/eT1)

“I don't think this group is properly collaborating. Very few interventions and this is reflected on their joint assignments...” (Mail114/eT1)

“In the end I think the assessment system we considered is fair with specific knowledge the students must have, but also with the idea of the collaborative learning” (Session5:P1, COD3)

It is also interesting to see how the process of interaction is understood by the ID, who is rather external to the main interdisciplinary and pedagogic tensions between P1 and P2:

“I'm in front of two minds and two souls, in their generative and dialogic space. I don't think they could do this alone...their result is about negotiation, and the final representation of the design in the syllabus is the product of two views of the pedagogical practices...” (MEMO4/ID)

This reflection by ID emerges as part of the process of making sense of the design in search for quality. It particularly focuses the idea of networked learning as a complex practice. To conclude, the reflection of P2 encompasses the idea of expanding the field of practice due to the joint quality perspective achieved:

“This course could be the beginning of something bigger. I think we can package it and prepare a post-lauream course like a Master Degree, for the contents we are re-elaborating and the approach would be innovative in our (national) context” (Session5/P2:COD7)

Discussion: gaining quality through collaborative learning design as process of mediation.

The analysis introduced above allowed us to explore and find concrete evidence for the process of mediation, in terms of knowledge shared relating to different perspectives on quality; experimentation of tools/approaches for quality; reflection and expansion/innovation for a new perspective of quality. What emerged clearly is that the process implies tight collaboration and negotiation of the participants' agency. Design is here negotiation of initially different points of view; one focused on the learner and the pedagogical processes, as well as the

adoption of educational technologies; the other centred on the excellence of the content; each of the participants is beholder of a perspective on the quality that is deeply rooted from the own personal point of view and history of teaching and making research. Both P1 (supported by eT1) and P2 (supported by eT2) launched the process on the basis of issues that were attempting against the quality. The focus of quality within design can be different and even conflictive, as we can see in the tensions between P1 and P2 to negotiate the initial perspective on quality (P1 on the content and P2 on the pedagogical process, Session 1/P1: COD3; Session 1/P2: COD7). However, the collaborative process leads to a combination of perspectives on the quality (MEMO4/ID), which in time determines the innovation for an expanded vision on quality (Mail107/eT1; Mail114/eT1; Session5/P2:COD7). The mediation occurs as symbolic change of personal positions; this expanded vision of quality is part of moving from an external position regarding a specific quality perspective, to a internal perspective. There is an intersemantic process that can be seen clearly in the expression of eT1 and P1 (Mail114/eT1; Session5:P2, COD3): the importance of collaboration as part of the focus of quality is achieved, beyond the initial idea where the focus of quality was the production of contents. But it is also present in the agreement, by P2, to better balance the activities on the NWL approach to support the focus of crucial content about the subject taught. The ID Memo quoted shows also this impression on the process of negotiation and meaning making, that is, the mediated quality. A very interesting result, to be highlighted, is the way the design (inter)thinking process mobilizes the academic staff interdisciplinary reflections regarding the field of research that is at the base of the knowledge taught. Indeed, the improvement on the quality results in generating a space for academic work in order to anchor terms and approaches, further conceptualizing the field of research, in order to have better examples of research and a clearer body of knowledge to be transmitted to students.

Conclusions

Our initial research question was: Can collaborative learning design mediate the process of achieving quality pedagogical practices that include the NWL as key dimension?

We tried to bring evidence underpinning the way in which collaborative learning design (and in this case the re-design) of a course is an operation that mediates the generation of quality, along a process were the participants improve their understanding on the quality problems; introduce and experience tools supporting the quality process; reflect on the quality achieved; and implement concrete innovations for quality. As we emphasized initially, quality teaching in HE, including innovations as NWL, is still difficult to achieve, and this is due to several factors among which the lack of coherent professional learning approaches to deal with the key issues that define the quality of NWL. Furthermore, in this paper we identified some of the issues discussed by the scientific community along a decade. It could be said that the discourses are fragmented even within the field of the theory and practice of NWL; it is to be noted that concrete approaches to implement the analysis and implementation of quality NWL are scarce. Collaborative learning design within a teacher-led inquiry process could be considered an effective strategy to mainstream quality practices in NWL, as the process of collaboration in designing for learning can become a space of mediation where an educator expands the own perspective of practice and quality of such practice (becoming an insider of a quality perspective). This is tightly connected with the personal experience and reflection on quality, in a space of negotiation with peers that are holders of different disciplinary and pedagogical conceptions of quality.

However a shortcoming could be that, in spite of the evidence collected on the effectiveness of collaborative learning design for quality, the implementation of such experience was extremely complex and had to struggle within a institutional contexts where other pressures, like standards for quantitative measuring of quality, curriculum and the same students' opinion could diminish the effectiveness of the process. Due to this, it will be necessary to blend micro-cases and qualitative analysis with meta-analysis (of several cases) and more massive surveys in order to build a clearer picture of how quality NWL can be integrated to a broader picture of quality teaching in HE.

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