ROLE OF STUDENT IN A REMOTE ONLINE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT & MANAGING ONLINE LEARNING

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STUDENTS ROLE IN A REMOTE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Students are expected to put into action a number of skills and competences which, although existing in onsite learning as an option or an asset for onsite students, they become a must for online learners.

Some of these are:

• Responsibility for, and high involvement in, own learning.

• Pro-active performance expected from students.

• Self-regulated learning.

• Engage in regular and effective communication.

• Learning in collaboration.

• Informational skills: search, selection and analysis, production, and dissemination of information and knowledge.

The Role of the Online Learner consists of a number of skills and competences which are not a birth gift, but have to be acquired and practised purposefully, knowing that the skills and competences applied in a traditional setting, as onsite students, should be either replaced, reinforced, or reoriented, when learning as online learners.

THE COMPETENCES THAT MAKE UP THE ROLE OF THE ONLINE LEARNER:

1. **Operational competence**

Efficient use of ICT tools for learning, communicating, collaborating and self-direction.

It should be noted though that proficient use of these tools does not automatically result in a higher level of overall proficiency as an online learner.

Main skills are:

• Adequate expertise in the use of ICT tools for communication and collaboration.

• Adequate expertise in the use of ICT tools for information search, retrieval, analysis and dissemination.

• Knowledge of how to use tools, facilities and navigation throughout the online learning environment.

2. **Cognitive competence Efficient learning of course content, applying own knowledge, and asking for help if necessary**

Main skills are:

• Know how to access course info such as course plan, course programme or study guide

• Know how to go about course materials and get the most of them.

• Know where other resources are, and how to retrieve them and use them.

• Know where help is available, and ask for it if necessary.

- Provide help to classmates or teacher, and at the right time.

- Learn in a reflective way and with critical thinking.

- Prepared to apply knowledge or to look for ways to apply own knowledge.

- Connect to online learning environment regularly.

3. **Collaborative competence Efficient communication and collaboration with classmates and teacher in OLE.**

Main skills are:

- Be willing to communicate, and to express one's ideas, opinions, feelings.

- Write efficiently for comprehension and communication.

- Capable of engaging classmates in learning or in group work.

- Participate in class discussion and class activities.

- Be prepared to negotiate meaning and to strive for consensus or agreement.

- Be prepared to seek feedback and learn from it.

- Be prepared to give feedback in order to learn.

- Be aware of the classroom or the online learning environment as a community of learners.

SELF-DIRECTING COMPETENCE

Efficient self-management, self-monitoring and self-appraisal when learning online. What a learner is, what s/he does, how much thinking puts into learning, her or his feelings and emotions are just as important as skills directly applied for learning contents or how to use ICT tools and course resources.

PERSONAL TRAITS FOR LEARNING ONLINE:

- Be prepared to take into account classmates' and teacher's ideas and criticism.

- Be prepared to learn from teacher and classmates.

- Be prepared to learn from one's or other classmates' mistakes.

- Be responsible for one's own learning, which means being autonomous and proactive rather than reactive.

- Originality of one's work, without cheating or using someone else's work.

- Resilience to failures, disappointment and uncertainty.

- Tolerance towards other learners' opinions, their ways of expressing themselves and working.

STRATEGIES FOR LEARNING ONLINE:

- Organize and manage one's resources adequately, particularly time.

- Negotiate or agree about time and amount of dedication to learning with family (spouse) or with workmates (boss).

- Set own learning goals.

- Set up own learning plan or learning contract.

- Self-discipline: adhering consistently to one's goals and one's time scheduling.

- Self-motivate, giving treats to oneself if necessary.

THINKING AND REFLECTION THAT LEARNING ONLINE ENTAILS:

- Be informed about what to do to prevent frustration.

- Self-monitor one's efforts, actions and progress.

- Learn from mistakes (own and others').

- Check out own efforts against one's goals, learning plan, learning contract and time schedule.

- Think of ways to improve one's organization and management of learning.

Course-specific competences Efficient assimilation or use of terminology, processes or know-how specific to the course, subject, degree or field of knowledge in an online learning environment.

These could include:

- Use the language learnt in communication with classmates and teacher.

- Read classmates' contributions to class discussions and class activities.

- Make a note of new or interesting expressions and vocabulary used by the teacher or classmates.

- Participate with ideas, opinions and experiences in class discussions, going beyond being a mere reader.

- Prepare beforehand synchronous sessions to be attended.

MODEL OF THE ROLE OF THE ONLINE LEARNER.

ROLE OF THE ONLINE LEARNER COMPETENCES

5.Course

2. Cognitive

3. Collaborative

3. Self-directing
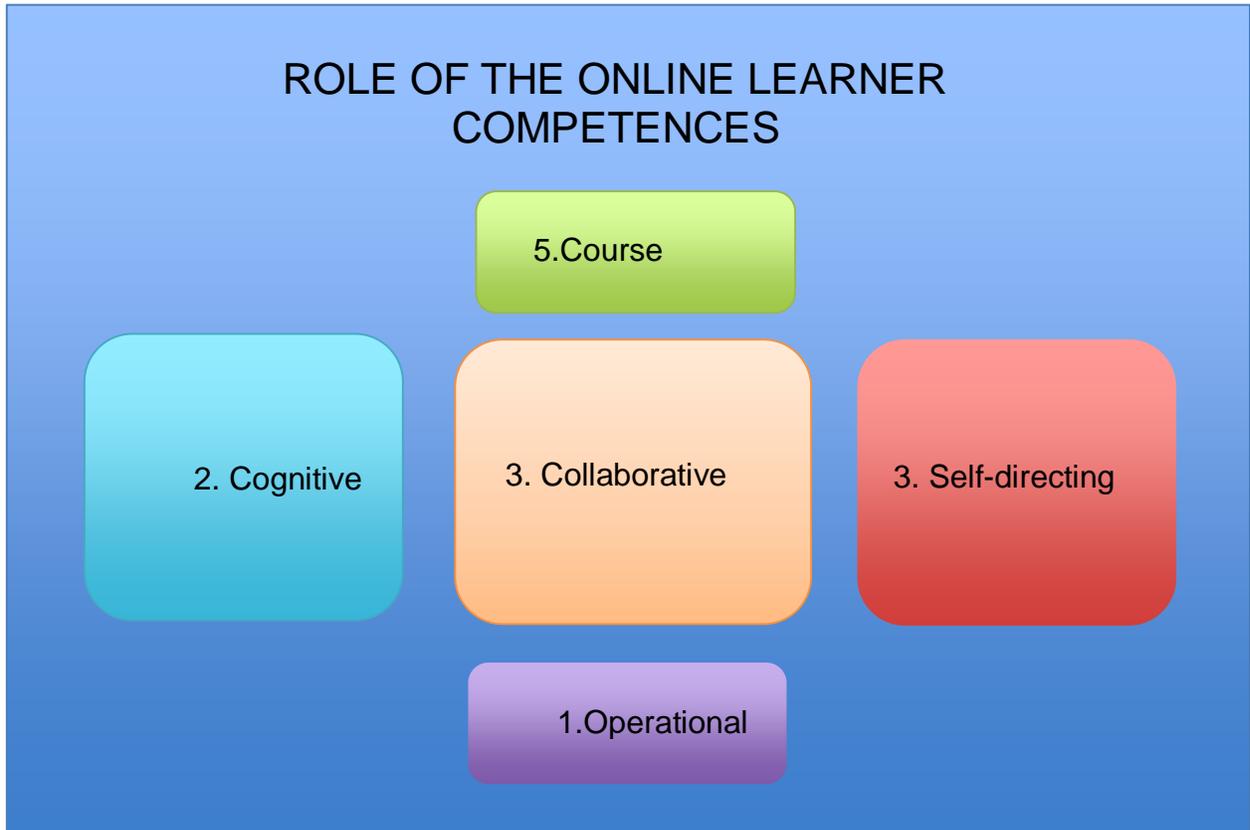
1.Operational

Operational competence is at the bottom to represent the set of ICT skills that every online learner has to know about and apply daily; it is on this competence that the rest of competences are built on, namely the one applied to learn course contents (Cognitive), for communication and collaboration (Collaborative), and the one put in practice by the learner internally (Self-directing) to put into action personal traits and skills with metacognitive strategies. At the same time, desirable or required skills and strategies specific to course contents, degree or even field of knowledge (Course-specific competence) exert an influence on self-directing, collaborative and cognitive competences.

Reference

Borges, F. (2008). THE ROLE OF THE ONLINE LEARNER: ONSITE STUDENTS BECOMING ONLINE LEARNERS . *Girona*, 3-5.