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Identifying the pitfalls for social interaction in computer-supported collaborative learning environments: a review of the research

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Abstract

Computer-mediated world-wide networks have enabled a shift from contiguous learning groups to asynchronous distributed learning groups utilizing computer-supported collaborative learning environments. Although these environments *can* support communication and collaboration, both research and field observations are not always positive about their working. This article focuses on factors which may cause this discrepancy, centering on two pitfalls that appear to impede achieving the desired results, namely taking for granted that participants will socially interact simply because the environment makes it possible and neglecting the social (psychological) dimension of the desired social interaction. It examines the social interactions which determine how groups develop, how sound social spaces characterized by group cohesion, trust, respect

groups develop, how sound social spaces characterized by group cohesion, trust, respect and belonging are established, and how a sense of community of learning is established. It concludes with an evaluation of educational techniques proposed by instructors and educators, as well as the findings of educational researchers and guidelines for avoiding the pitfalls.



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Keywords

Collaboration; Computer-supported collaborative learning; Social interaction

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