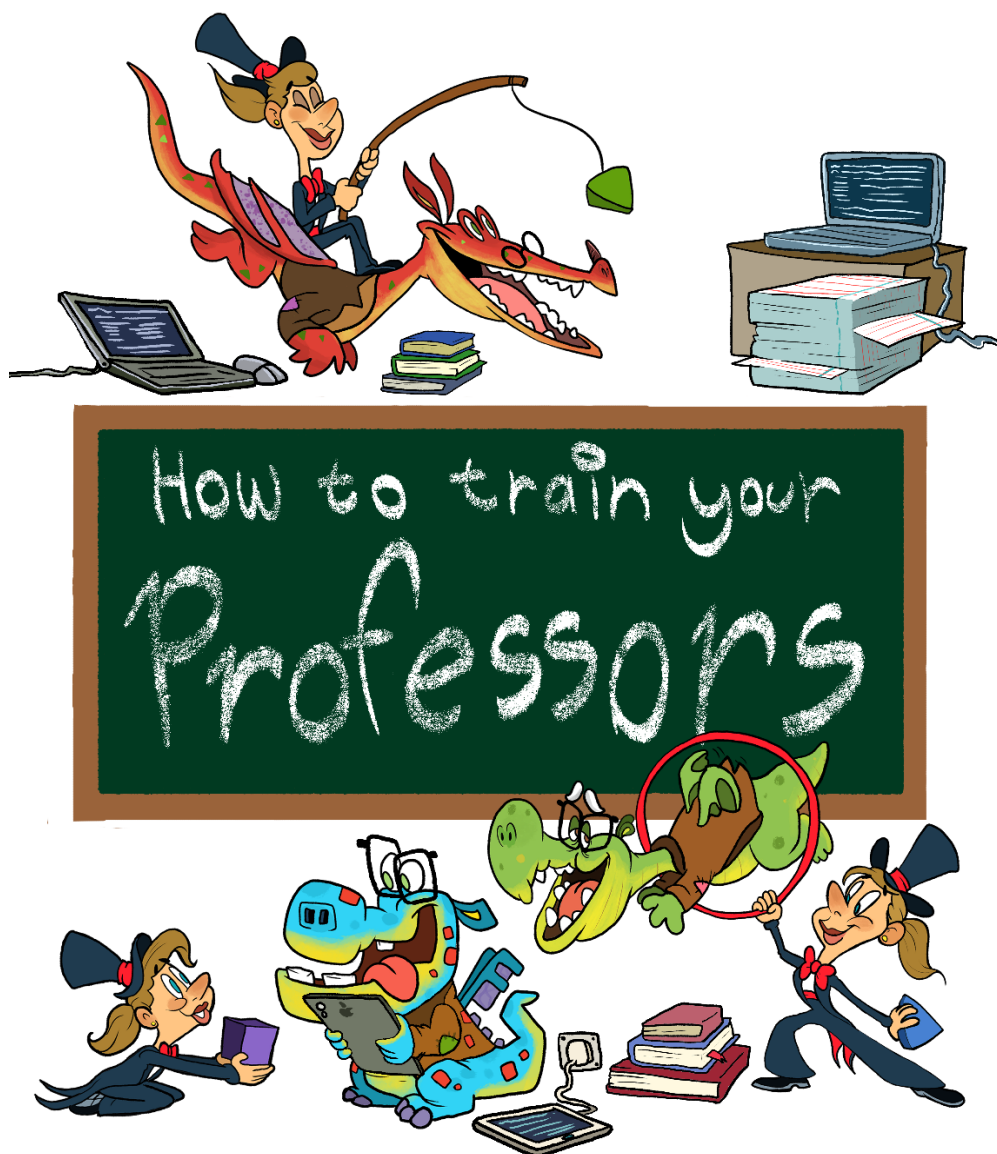


ANJA GARONE PHD DEFENSE

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HOW TO TRAIN YOUR PROFESSORS

Aligning digital profiles with professional development preferences for blended learning

ANJA GARONE

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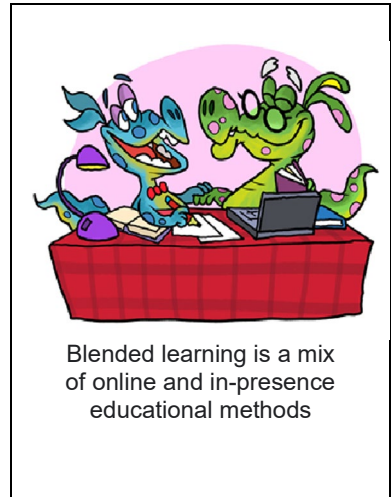
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A SUMMARY OF ANJA'S THESIS

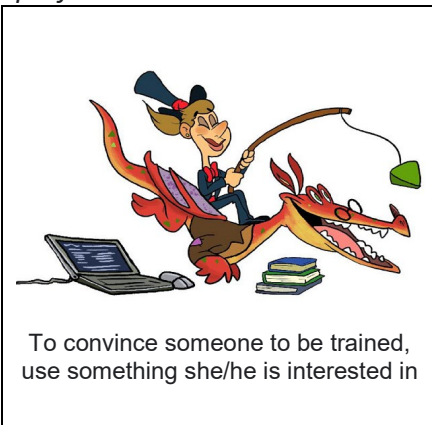
What is blended learning? *Blended learning is an approach to teaching that combines the best of both worlds: online teaching tools with face-to-face teaching methods.*

Is it useful? *Evidence shows that a mix of online education and traditional education methods is very effective and allows the student more flexibility.*

Then let's just use it! What's the problem? *Blended learning cannot be introduced in an institution at zero cost. It requires investments, both in terms of human resources (enough personnel, with enough time, and with enough training in the correct usage tools) and of technical resources (platforms, software, hardware, and technical support).*



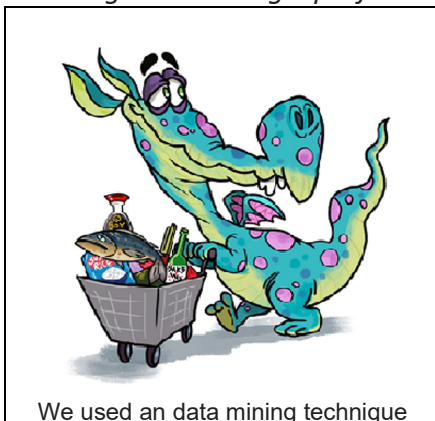
How is this related with your PhD Thesis? *In this thesis I focused on the following problem: how to rationally design a blended learning training offer that is interesting for ALL the professors we want to train?*



Is this really a problem? *Absolutely yes! The reality of academia is that professors are overworked and have no time to spare. Real-world practice says that most professors will participate only to training that they feel as relevant/interesting for them.*

So what did you do in this PhD Thesis? *The first step was to analyze the problem. After, I designed and sent out a survey to collect data concerning the professors (faculty, attitude toward technology, etc.) and their desiderata on how they would like to be trained in blended learning.*

Do we really need research for this? Wouldn't be just enough to give them what they want? *It is not that simple. In fact providing training means to use resources. To offer a different training to each single professor would be inefficient, and in most cases unrealistic.*



Ok, so what did you propose ? *The idea behind my thesis is to use the data collected in the survey make informed choices on how to structure professor's training according to the needs of certain groups of professors.*

In which sense ? *I did two things: 1) To characterize how preferences connect to each other (e.g. the fact that if one wants training A, usually also wants training B but not training C); 2) To group professors in "typical profiles" that can be targeted as groups.*

used in marketing known as
"shopping basket analysis"

How did you do so ? I used a mix of classical classification analyses typically used in Educational Science, together with association rules analysis coming from Data Mining which is typically used in marketing research.

What are your results ? I could clearly identify groups of training approaches that are of interest for the professors that should be offered together in a coherent way. I could also classify professors to be trained in three typical profiles (Early Adopters, Early Majority, Late Majority) and clearly identify which type of training and support are typically of interest for each profile.



Early Adopters

- Innovation & interest in BL ↑
- Institutional vision & Guidance ↑
- Autonomy ↑
- Coaching-mentoring ↑
- Certification ↓



Early Majority

- Institutional vision & Guidance ↑
- Coaching-mentoring ↑
- Autonomy ↓
- Certification ↓



Late Majority

- BL relevance ↑
- Institutional vision & Guidance ↑
- Incentive: Certification ↑
- Coaching-mentoring ↑
- Autonomy ↓

A summary of the professors' profile that we have identified, with their needs.

What comes next ? Four main directions: 1) There a silent majority that did not even answer to the survey. Randomly selected interviews should be organized to understand if their preference distribution is similar to the respondents; 2) further characterization of the profile, in particular linking attitudes towards blended learning and experience with professional development to these training preferences 3) organizing a pilot to verify experimentally my findings: a longitudinal observational study following the professional development pathways of professors.

What are your final messages ?

- 1) To train professors for blended learning we need a **"person-centered" approach**;
- 2) **Technology acceptance** is a relevant way to characterize groups of teaching staff;
- 3) **Preference analysis** can help to build a **training program** that is relevant for the trainees;
- 4) **Does one-size fit all?**
 - a. Some **common preferences** exist
 - b. But there are **important differences** between profiles which must be considered
- 5) **AI and Data Mining** tools are very relevant tools for research in educational sciences.

Any last word ? Yes, now... let's party!



Join us for a drink (and some food!) after the PhD defense !

SHORT BIO: Anja Garone is a PhD candidate at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB).

She began her career as a registered nurse in 2009 in Finland where she specialized in intensive and emergency care. She worked as a registered nurse in several countries.

In 2015 she started a master's in educational sciences at the VUB, after which in 2018 she started her PhD in the same department.



She is currently working as a lecturer of evidence-based nursing in the nursing department of the University College Leuven-Limburg, and as an educational researcher in the department of education and development of the same institution.

Her research interests include professional development in higher education with specific interests in blended learning, CLIL and intercultural competences. She is currently active in a series of national and international research and innovation projects and activities centered around developing nursing and engineering education.



*If you want more details on this PhD thesis,
or if you have questions, want to chat, or to collaborate,*

feel free to contact Anja at the email anja.garone@ucll.be

2022 - Illustration by Martinus Van Tee