Design, Analysis and Evaluation of Virtual Forums as a Pedagogical Tool Didactics in the Teaching of English

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Abstract: *Manage virtual forums as a teaching tool - teaching in the assessment of learning processes, proposes a new conception of them; teachers and students must take a different generally adopted in the spaces of formal education role.*

The online forums are increasingly shaping up as a powerful tool of communication and collaborative work. These workspaces and dialogue provide the possibility of participation in a thoughtful way, compared to other communication tools and job synchronic where immediacy is an obstacle to reflection and analysis.

Based on this importance, the role of coordinator, moderator, often played by teacher takes on a role of great importance, because who will recognize, then reflection, proposes new directions, etc.., within the space of the forum. Likewise, this research shares the experience of the evaluation of virtual forums in teaching English for undergraduate students within the Institute of Technology Tláhuac II.

Keywords: *Teacher training, competences in TIC´s, pedagogical application.*

1. INTRODUCTION

We can define the virtual forum as a communication space consisting of dialog boxes including those who leave messages that can be classified thematically. In these spaces, users, and in the case at hand, educational forums, students can make new contributions, clarify others refute the other participants, etc.., In an asynchronous manner, enabling inputs and messages users remain in the time available to other participants.

One of the main characteristics of virtual forums and defining your character is a synchrony embedded in the concept definition itself. The forums are tools that can be used and accessed at any time, without having to agree on a specific time, but the contributions of the other participants are collected continuously, and can be answered in the time you want.

This asynchronous rigged character brings another great feature of the forums, and they are tools that allow a greater degree of reflection of the amount contributed by the other participants. Thus, it has more time to organize and write their own ideas, and reflect on the views of other participants.

In this sense, the contributions can also acquire different meanings and can be something different than what I tried but complementary, and therefore enriching; or it may be a reflection on some aspect on which they disagree and can add time to reflect as we said above, more grounded.

Moreover, from a general perspective, we can set different types of forums as May social, technical, academic, thematic consultation etc. A forum can have while academic characteristics, be consultation with overtones of social meeting space, or have been created to work on a specific subject, or consult technical issues ...., combinations may be multiple, many as defined by the features that teachers and students or moderating the forum and print development.

1.1. Theoretical Framework

Currently, electronic tools are gathering in learning platforms that claim to offer a more meaningful learning environment, a campus where many opportunities for communication and interaction that are intended to supplement classroom teaching and seek to conform to her offered a new way of understanding the educational act. Thus, the virtual experience contains elements of non-formal and informal learning.

This new reality has led to the European institutions to pay attention to the learning that happens in these virtual environments as spaces that develop skills and gain skills to work in regulated parallel educational institutions. As is indicated in the Bergen (2005), the development of frameworks skills training is "opportunity to integrate learning throughout life to Higher Education" (EUCEN, 2005:4)

Virtual environments and active participation of citizens in these environments is the key to learning throughout life, so college students provide intervention strategies, collaboration and self-study will help in the process and construction management knowledge (Conference Board of Canada, 1991; Balanskat and others, 2006).

Are two processes that teachers strive to match, couple, integrate, and adapt and all verbs that serve to bring the teaching to learning on topic Virtual Forum,

Teacher-student-knowledge triad, the treatment of content through planning, developing student activities, and assessment: This caption appears essentially as controversial since its definition, several units of analysis as displayed closure as learning processes, etc.

Focusing on the assessment, pause to analyze it is not from the quantitative point of view and closing stages, but to ask what, how and when to evaluate ... But what is evaluated? Evaluation is an essential tool, which must deal with any institution, chair, teachers and students, as it is indicative of parameters and allows us to detect failures of components or parts of this process.

In our country for a long time, has used a quantitative and final evaluation, which indicates number of students approved and disapproved levels of approval and disapproval.

But at this point, teaching content, units, subjects or courses has been completed. So how do you do to avoid complete failure? How to display the process to detect the lack of understanding, study, or both, and overcome this obstacle before the process finishes?

We believe it is more than that rate, the educational system requires an assessment as part of teaching and learning; an assessment that allows us to make adjustments, changes, setbacks as part of the learning spiral, allowing learners (thus we include both the teacher and the student) to take permanent control and not only quantitative but qualitative to regulate both the process teaching as the learning.

The heterogeneity of the Mexican Educational System allows today include different levels (such as adult secondary, college courses, specializations, graduate, etc.) Non-contact methods and / or blended with virtual mediation. This maturity involving student autonomy in the study and management tools like Virtual Platforms that include the use of chat, forums and mailing needs

2. OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

Design, analysis and evaluation of virtual forums as a didactic teaching tool in the teaching of English.

2.1. Specific Objectives

- Conduct an assessment of the current status of the subject within the Institute of Technology Tláhuac II.

- Designing virtual forums and practical teaching materials for the area of Engineering.

- Analyze the use of online forums in pedagogy students Institute of Technology Tláhuac II.

- Evaluate online forums used in teaching practice students Institute of Technology Tláhuac II.

2.2. Justification

Technology education cannot occur within a single discipline but must be given as an interdisciplinary field of nature which is a powerful factor of curricular integration, since all areas of knowledge one way or another are being systematized the order to make them more dynamic and effective.

Ignoring the new computer technologies in teaching English at the University of studio is creating a barrier between the daily lives of students and the experiences they have in school, and they live in a world overrun with computer systems and mails are mostly controlled by computers.

Any knowledge construction process is mediated by an instrument, whether material or symbolic. The computations instruments provide excellent support in learning, allowing observe, listen, stimulate, manipulate and interact with the real things, simulated virtual environments, motivating student interest in studying the English language; thus preparing future professionals the country needs.

The revitalization of the teaching and learning of English through the application of TIC´s, bring interesting tools focused on the explanation and understanding of the language, which would help students improve their performance in their working lives, as have the ability to listen, speak and write, and do not depend on the memorization of "language" and / or monotonous exercises that generate motivation and disinterest in the subject; well that would strengthen the technological skills needed in the workplace.

The work went mostly to implement virtual forums Google Site tool, which are the best option for the design and implementation of virtual environments in public education, because they offer ease of use and low investment budget by the educational institution, taking into account the current economic situation of public education, which is reviewed and centralized.

3. METHODOLOGY

Systematic that were used in carrying out the objective of the investigation is shown in Table 1; likewise explains the steps performed for the completion of the investigation, the steps are explained, the description and the time it took to perform this research.

Table 1. *Methodology Project*

Phase	Processing time															
	January				February				March				April			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Planning																
Design																
Development																
Evaluation																
Development of Report																

From the above schedule can observe the following steps:

3.1. Planning

Objectives (general and specific) research is planned and defined the study site. In Figure 1 of the minutes used for meetings of the project is shown.

3.2. Design

Calculating the sample population was made; well as the design platform virtual forum, the assessment tool was also developed to evaluate the performance of the forum.

In this section the following formula to obtain a representative sample of the population of 178 students in 4 subjects was used.

$$n = \frac{n_o}{1 + \dfrac{n_0}{N}} \quad donde = n_0 = p * (1 - p) * \left[\frac{z_{1-\frac{\alpha}{2}}}{d} \right]^2$$

N = total sample to calculate
n_o = Partial Sample
z = Confidence interval
d = allowable error
p = Probability of success
q = probability of failure.

For the study of the project, a confidence interval of 95% was used a permissible error of 5%, then described the structural formula:

$$n = \frac{384.16}{1 + \dfrac{384.16}{178}} \quad donde = n_0 = (0.5) * (1 - 0.5) * \left[\frac{(1.96)}{0.05} \right]^2$$

As can be seen, the study sample to a confidence interval of 95% and 5% error allowed was 122 students, which was taken into account for the evaluation of the virtual forum.

$$n = \frac{384.16}{1 + 2.1582} = \frac{384.16}{3.1582} = 121.63 \approx 122 \, students$$

The following is the virtual forum in which students shared their experiences and interact with other students, see Figure 2.
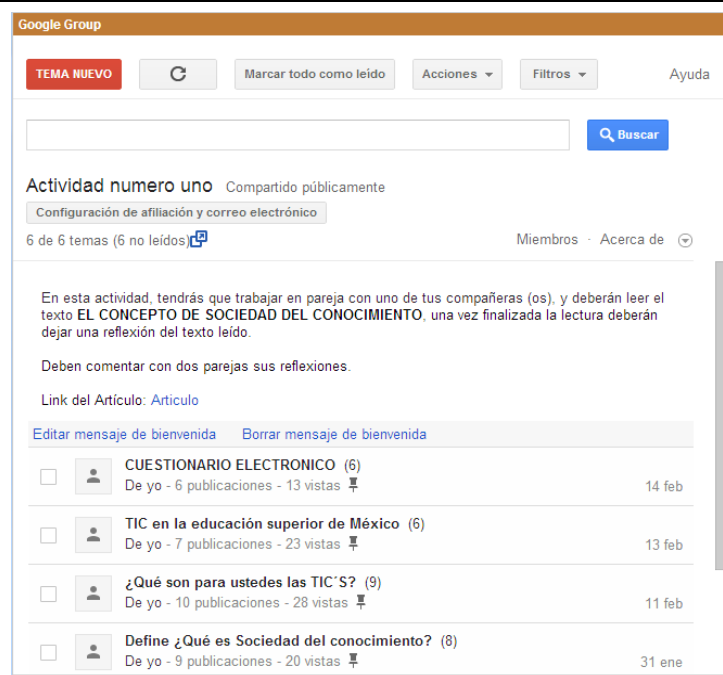
Fig. 2. *Example Virtual Forum*

3.3. Development

This section conducted the evaluation of the virtual forum; the evaluation of the assessment instrument was analyzed taking into account the objective of the project. For this research a mixed type was performed, were considered as features of both qualitative approach and the quantitative approach. To diagnose a quantitative approach, which was studied at the University professors to determine their knowledge about virtual forums as a didactic teaching tool and assessment tool that was handled was used: survey.

On the other hand, the qualitative approach to the university and studied the dimensions in which online forums are important is determined, the assessment instrument that was used in this approach: Interview and Observation Form. The following is the assessment of students to virtual forums, see Figure 3.

Fig.3. *Example of evaluation of students to virtual forums*

Mention is made descriptive - exploratory and design tools as transversal cross different variables information is collected. Set out below some questions kind of assessment instruments that were

applied to students of the University to evaluate virtual forums as a didactic teaching tool, observation sheet and the survey (Figure 4).

Fig. 4. *Example of the evaluation survey to virtual forums*

3.4. Analysis of Results

Once the study, meeting the objective of the research was verified and recommendations were made to it.

3.5. Development of Report

The final research report was prepared and presented to the appropriate authorities.

4. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

After applying the assessment tool for students in engineering at the University, he went on to data processing, a descriptive analysis of the most important variables derived from the research instruments, which allowed to determine in accordance with the objectives was conducted raised in the research.

4.1. Results of Teachers Who Teach the English Course

The first result obtained was the average age of teachers of the University, which ranges from age 30, which speaks to University study has young teachers, which may serve to potentiate the TIC´s in the classroom teacher for teaching English.

Another important feature of the study sample was that 55% were male; therefore, 45% belong to the feminine gender. On the other hand the 71.35% are teachers who are currently part of the administrative area and 28.65% belongs only to the teaching area.

Another peculiarity of the studied group is that 75% of respondents have teaching experience and only 25% do not, which speaks to that percentage of people with teaching experience is required. One more feature, was 95% of the survey group people has the title of areas of engineering and economics - Administrative and only 5% have a degree in the area of teaching.

A distinctive research group is that 100% know what they are TIC´s, but only 17% to the University received a course of study related to TIC´s in educational practice of English language teaching another peculiarity is that 90% of teachers surveyed know the impact of TIC´s in teaching practice but only 10% of teachers plan their classes with mainstreaming in TIC´s. Another important feature derived from the study is that 90% of teachers who do not plan their lessons with TIC´s are they do not know a software or application thereof in teaching.

Another peculiarity of the research group is that 10% who plan their lessons to mainstreaming TIC´s use it as database administrator and only 7% to 10% of teachers indicated that they use as a

productivity tool but the observation, we can see that it is used solely to maintain listings of qualifications but not to develop such statistics or projections.

4.2. Results of Students Studying the English Course

The first results obtained from the survey was that for the first section of the sample of 122 students for the page layout of virtual forums, a 58.62% said it was excellent the design, 27.58% said it was good the design and 13.79% was alluded to regulate the design. In addition to the accessibility of the forums, a 71.72% said it was excellent and only 28.28% said it was good accessibility.

For the evaluation of the activities outlined in the forums, a 68.96% said they were excellent a 27.58% said they were good and only 3.46% were referred to regular. To end the first section, in the area of assessments raised a 75.51% indicated they were excellent and only 24.49% reported they were good. Note that in the first section of the evaluation of the forums, most of the responses were on average good to excellent.

For the second part of the evaluation of virtual forums, students with 75.86% chose to use the forums, while a 9.17% chose the workshops, a 7.86% preferred subjects and 7.11% chose data queries.

For the third section of the evaluation of the post, the difficulties encountered in the use of the same was as follows: A 68.62% said they had no difficulty, a 15.78% indicated they had difficulty due to lack of money, a 12.88% expressed who had difficulty due to lack of computer equipment a 2.72% reported difficulty was lack of time.

By the fourth section of the evaluation of virtual forums, which assessed the frequency of visits a 72.42% said they often visited the forums; while only 27.58% mentioned that sometimes visited Forum and 0% said they never visited the forums.

To conclude the evaluation survey, the penultimate question: Do you think that this page was a support tool in your learning process? 100% of students said that if it was a tool to support your learning process. To complete the evaluation survey, the last question: Do you wish to continue using this type of alternative to study? 100% of students mentioned that if you would like to continue using this type of alternative to study.

5. CONCLUSION

After completing this research and analyzed the data we can conclude the following:

- Worryingly for the present time in University study no training in the use of TIC´s in the classroom.

- Most teachers have not received formal training in TIC´s, but did autodidact self.

- There is an appropriate use of technology resources in the centers where the infrastructure.

- Teachers University studies show a greatly reduced use of English in their teaching.

- We designed and implemented a virtual classroom for the forums of the subjects, Google Site using the platform, thus fulfilling the overall objective of initial project.

- The proper monitoring and tracking of income and use of the platform was performed virtual, collecting valuable information to support the results of this work.

- The virtual classroom Forums scored a significant percentage of high valuations being evaluated by students in aspects of their experience and the activities, such as design, planned activities, assessments, forums, workshops and treated subjects.

- Proposed goals were met, we were able to promote the management students of TIC´s for learning English, providing through this significant tool students study at the University of Reinforcement.

- It is noticeable improvement in the level of academic performance students, and can confirm that the virtual classroom is a valuable tool support in the educational process.

- The virtual classroom is a platform that was used effectively to the scope of the study students materials helping enrich their knowledge with various resources that supported the process learning.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Suggest the use of other tools available on the Internet (blogs, wiki, etc.) as a means for conducting group work and encourage students to search for and generate contributions to the improvement of existing platform.

- It should do more research to raise design virtual classrooms in the various areas of knowledge

- Enlarge this research on evaluation as a future project virtual education courses, using integrative evaluative models.

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