

On-Line Social Networks: Innovative Ways Towards the Boost of Collaborative Language Learning

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Abstract

On-line social networks are modifying the space-time of the scenarios where the communication process was occurring until now. They have deeply changed the traditional functions of the issuer and the recipient. The field of education cannot be unaware of the innovative, revolutionary way of communication which new technologies are affording us. Teachers must use it in order to turn it into a great ally in the learning process.

On-line social networks can be defined as a dynamic exchange between people, groups and institutions within complex environments. Their intrinsic characteristics turn them into an ideal means of improving the educational process: interaction between their users helps communication, the variety of used and exchanged contents stimulates learning and the fact that they are under-construction, open systems imply that attention never declines.

An special mention should be done to the most important characteristic for the field of education: its collaborative character. Collaborative teaching and learning help the exchange and development of knowledge aimed at achieving academic goals. The main benefits are:

- Increase in motivation.
- Each individual learning increases group learning.
- It helps to fix what has been learned.
- Decrease in the anxiety that individual problem-solving situations generate.

Through the knowledge and analysis of the generic and specific on-line social networks most commonly used in transnational cooperation environments, the essential guidelines on the easy and effective use of these networks are drawn, not only as a didactic resource but also as an innovative communication vehicle between teacher and student. As illustrative example of a useful and real application, I am presenting an innovative project on the usage of on-line social networks within the field of teaching and learning foreign languages.