

A Virtual Learning Environment in the University Classroom: an Active Place Where Teachers and Student Interact

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Abstract

The Application of the Information and Communication Technologies in the teaching/learning process has become very popular. Using the Internet to learn a language creates wide opportunities to enhance learning (Hamper et al. 2006). The internet activities promote learner self-monitoring ability, encourage the use of multimedia and network technology, develop students' cooperation, foster participation in wikis, weblogs discussion groups, chat rooms, podcasts or forum. We have been using the ICT in the classroom and we can say it has been very productive. During the latest years, there have been many changes in education as these new technologies have become an important part in the teaching/learning process. We have working with VLEs (Virtual Learning Environments). According to Tech Terms Computer Dictionary, VLE is a virtual classroom where teachers and students can communicate. Teachers upload multimedia resources, class information and additional learning materials. Students access the website and view the information provided and may also download and upload assignments. VLEs have evolved as at an early stage, these virtual environments were only ways of transmitting information. Teachers uploaded the virtual and multimedia resources and students read this information. At a higher stage, VLEs have become interactive. This means that students are no longer passive actors, they become active. Through group discussions, forum, wikis and interactive activities, students take action and play a leading role in their learning process.

We have designed a virtual environment where students, weekly, must contribute with their opinions, comments in response to a required activity uploaded by the teacher. In this paper, we describe this weekly task and analyse students' opinion about this planned activity. The students become an active subject in this field. In this paper, we show how VLEs are no longer a means of transmitting information but a means of interaction.