The Use of Edublogs in University Classroom: an Educational Experience

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1. Introduction

Knowledge and information society has supposed lots of transformations that affect our daily routine from our way of communicating, relating with each other, working, and even coexisting with the environment. These changes have to be assumed from the educative world, and, specially, in universities, essential for information and knowledge management as well as value education and citizenship training.

Little by little in the educative field new formulas are being added which are transforming education and learning more attractive to the student (for instance 2.0 tools). However, when we look for information about the application of social networks to education, not always we find real ones, but, on the other hand, we find "changes in the surface but not in the content". Educative system in all its levels, as social institution, cannot ignore the changes that are being produced by moments. We are living in a "Digital and technological culture era", in which our students are regular users of the different technologies, from internet to videogames, mobile phones, etc. Therefore, the educative system has to develop competences in ICT use in all its users, that is, in students as well as in teachers, and prepare them to future challenges. ICT correctly used can help to innovate and to improve the teaching-learning process inside and outside the classroom.

2. The Web 2.0 in education

According to Mestre ([3]) the net has radically transformed the processes of production, reproduction and distribution of information, minimizing the amount of technical media that is necessary to broadcast digital media through the large mesh networks. This change is what some authors have called the Web 2.0. There have been many definitions that have been offered since its inception. We can say that Web 2.0. is the net as platform, which combines a group of tools to interact "reading-writing", creating communities of practice. It is a concept, an idea that turns the user into the main actor of this great community ([3]).

Web 2.0. involves the use of new tools for communication, collaboration, creation, interaction and documentation, that are easy to use. Several authors have tried to come together its most significant characteristics, coinciding mostly in the following: Software without the necessity of being installed previously in the computer; Interactive environment; Language standardization; New ways of working, communicating and web participation; New collaboration networks; Saving time; Make easier the interactions.

Education 2.0. will promote an educative model directed to the collaborative production, where the information interchange and the collective construction of knowledge will be the central point which directs the teaching-learning process. Therefore, it will be promoted the appearance of the active school, which will allow the student's mobility and will give them opportunities to take control of their own learning process. These new students will have to possess diverse competences, as could be the following ones ([1]): "Adapting themselves to an environment that will be modified very fast; Working in groups in a collaborative way; Applying creativity to problem solving; Knowing how to co-operate; Learning new knowledge and assimilating new ideas very fast; Creation and application of knowledge to new and unknown situations; Taking new initiatives and being independent; Identifying problems and developing solutions; Gathering and organizing events; Working with data in different types of codes and with different sources of knowledge; Communicating with different types of tools; Control and management capacity of their own formative processes; Identifying and developing alternative solutions; Solving problems in an independent way".

3. Blog and education

Web 2.0. can use any type of intuitive digital tools, and as we have seen in the previous section, blogs are part of these web 2.0 tools. Weblogs are not easy to define in one sentence. The difficulty of defining weblogs has something to do with the fact that they could have different goals, uses, or writing styles with only one thing in common: format.

We can say that blogs are personal or group diaries, with Internet filters, which are organized frequently and are arranged in reverse chronological that allows the reader write comments and to the author respond to it ([3]).

Other authors define it as: *"A simplified model of Website characterized by its ease of updating"* ([5]); or as *"new form of dynamic websites"* ([6]). Blogs also have links to other blogs and websites for more information, citing sources, etc.

A blog is a basic and simple Webpage, where users can post comments, articles, photos, links and even videos. However, it has characteristics that differentiate them from other pages:
- Accommodation is usually free, requires only a basic Internet connection.
- The content is very varied. Its philosophy is the freedom of Contents.
- Access is usually free. Anyone can access them, although the blog owner can setting for other users to have registering.

- Administration is simple.
- It is interactive ([7]).

This tool 2.0. offers the possibility of getting a website without any apparent effort, easy to use and free; it has great power of interaction and provides collaborative learning; awaken interest and improves students' motivation, are stimulating their creative; allows the communication of ideas of their own; as well as provide continuous assessment of the student and professor can knowing you better to her/his students ([8]).

3.1 What is Edublog?

Edublog is the conjunction of the words education and blog, referring to blogs whose main objective is to support the teaching-learning process within the educational context.

In the network are many definitions, be interesting to stand out a few: *"…weblogs whose main objective is to support the teaching-learning process in an educational context" ([9]); "…is the group of educational blogs"* ([10]).

This tool is oriented to learning through its interactive web publishing, giving new learning environments. The ease of use makes it even more attractive, because anyone can make it possible to create a blog with some minimal knowledge. Furthermore, its use in the classroom makes limits to be expanding to a virtual context.

Both, education and blogs, share a fundamental characteristic: both concepts can be defined as knowledge-building processes, or in the words of Sáez Vacas ([9]) *"an interactive conversation on a trip to the knowledge".*

3.2 Characteristics of Edublog

Edublogs have specific characteristics related to the teaching-learning process. Efimova et. al. ([15]) identifies four educational characteristics on blogs, this are: learning from multiple perspectives, synergies for community learning and self-managed, distributed learning and support for the development of metacognitive skills. In addition, De Haro ([12]) speaks of three characteristics, which are: focus on practical teaching, consist of micro content and allow student teacher interaction.

Exist different ways to use an Edublog, some:
- Share materials, news, download, links and more.
- Facilitate online discussions and collaboration.
- *Create a class publication that students can easily publish to and you can easily edit.*
- Students can share their work and thoughts with their classmates and professors
- Share your lesson planning.
- *Integrate videos, podcasts, and other media.*
- Create blogs for student groups, events, or about any type of group.
- *Get feedback or gather information.-*
- *Create a fully functional website.*

3.3 Types of Edublog

Most authors consulted for this review theoretical they propose a classification of very similar Edublogs, so here are several of them, which are shown to illustrate more fully. One of the simple classifications is that of Lara ([14]), who referred us to the following:
- *Weblog of the subject.*
- *Students' Weblog.*

The Edublog depending on their function, authorship, content, level of education and addressees, it presents a typological classification, which according to De Haro ([13]) is grouped as follows:
- Blogs teaching material management.
- *Blogs Project Management individual student.*
- *Blogs Project Management group student.*
- Blogs project management between centers.
- Blogs as an assessment tool.

4. Edublog experience in the classroom

Blogs have great potential as a tool in the field of education, since they can adapt to any discipline, educational level, or teaching method**.**

Specifically, Edublogs as a tool 2.0., may seem a technological resource more, however can become a very useful teaching tool and with good results. We can apply the Edublog in the classroom and outside it as a forum for open dialogue, where teachers and students will can to interact freely expressing. The range of employment possibility within and outside the classroom is huge, such as: ask and answer questions, add comment, organize debates, analyze articles related to the subject, organize events, etc.

Experience has been initiated by beginning in the second semester of 2011-2012 academic year with students enrolled in the Educational Psychology course, pertaining to degree to Childhood Education and Degree in Psychology, Faculty of Education at the University of Huelva.

The objective of this research is that students learn to use blogs as teaching tools for their professional future. Similarly, we want students to be active agents in their teaching-learning process.

First, we explain the experience to develop with students. Second, sign a contract for working commitment. Later on, they start working on blog, looking for information, books, videos, etc.

We propose the construction of Blogs Project Management group student, which work in specific topics of the course. All these blogs are collected in Weblog of the subject, created by the teachers of the subject.

As a work in progress we can only say a few conclusions: high motivation of students for this experience, teamwork capacity, good coordination between students and teachers.

New technologies in education can provide new educational approaches, but this will depend on the particular use that we provide. Web 2.0 is not only a change in tools, but also it represents a change in attitude.

We can say that the growing process of Web 2.0. represents a social revolution rather than a technological revolution. Instead of talking about technology we can talk about an "attitude" which is basically the "encouraging participation through open applications and services" ([16]).

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