Web 2.0 As A Pedagogical Strategy In The Process Of English Language Teaching - Learning

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, multimedia systems have been used in teaching English, but the introduction of Information and Communication Technology, or ICT, in a "massive" way has provided the teachers with a powerful tool to motivate students. However, this has become an issue in schools of the state due to the absence of concepts and methods.

In short, it is stated that the advance was obtained when Information and Communication Technology was suddenly introduced into the educational system, so this proposal was emphasized only in Web 2.0 specifically developing the work platform of the Inglés y Virtualidad program at the Universidad Nacional Distance Education University Florida with YouTube and blogs as educational tools.

This paper describes the results of a research project that shows how to integrate Web 2.0 technologies into the teaching of English in order to contribute to the formation of updated, collaborative and creative instructors. Hence, what is truly relevant in the process is to get teachers to make pedagogical use of new technologies.

Keywords: Didactics of English, teacher, elementary education, B-Learning and Web 2.0 technologies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since long ago the speed in which knowledge has multiplied is widely known, as well as its transformation into information and the need to have it quickly available to streamline processes. This aforementioned fact requires the inclusion of strategies and tools provided by new technologies which are applied to education.

Given this situation, there exists the priority of developing competency among teachers in this particular subject, all of whom are expected to develop the ability to utilize ICT in teaching a second language and helping students to act as citizens of a modern and multicultural society.

The importance of this project is to create a methodological proposal for incorporating Web 2.0 technologies into the teaching and learning of English at the Escuela Normal Superior Bucaramanga, and it must begin with teacher training. To better illustrate the purpose, collaborative learning activities 2.0 are built to yield a product consisting of a specific Methodology Guide, where English teachers can draw out different possibilities of working with ICT.

2. WEB 2.0

Generalities: With the passing of time, these technologies have evolved and have become what we now know as Web 2.0 tools. This term was first used by Dale Dougherty and Craig Cline, and subsequently by Tim O’Reilly in 2004, who defined it as the second generation in developing and designing websites. Web 2.0 facilitates communication, exchange of information under safe parameters, and the inter-operability and collaboration among users, thus making them active Separations of the website.

Web 2.0 and Education: The sites under a Web 2.0 design are dynamic for they not only offer information hosting for users but also make use of multiple applications. These make Web 2.0 design ideal for creating information in collaboration with others, organizing social networks, sharing videos and photos, and creating wikis, blogs, podcasts, and folksonomies, among other benefits.

There is no doubt that the design of Web 2.0 tools is becoming more and more useful these days, and that it can also be applied in the use of teaching English as a versatile and varied process. With an impressive speed, Web 2.0 tools make it possible for learners to use Web services offered by some providers, which is actually an endless array of free tools and applications of the network that teachers should take advantage of. When these tools are combined with each other, some of them become popularly known as wikis, blogging, micro blogging sites, social markers or tags (social bookmarking) and spaces for storing and sharing videos, photos, audio, images, PowerPoint presentations, documents, spreadsheets, maps, RSS, and so on. In fact, it is difficult to establish which of them are in greater demand, use or importance, as they all offer a wide array of information and communication options, and they all are potentially useful. However, this time, blogs and YouTube served as support in order to implement these tools.

Integration of ICT in teaching practice: The Department of Education in Victoria, Australia (1998) proposes three stages in which the teacher passes the integration of ICT: The first stage is the exploration of new possibilities that technologies offer for learning, developing new skills and understanding the role that ICT can play in the classroom. The second is the development of personal skills and the incorporation of ICT in teaching, as well as developing classroom practices that integrate learning technologies. The third is concerned with the development of advanced skills, the formulation of innovative ways to use class technology, and the sharing of knowledge and skills with others.

Therefore, the use of new technologies is not an isolated phenomenon, but an allied activity in carrying out the ultimate goals of educational institutions.

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3. METHODOLOGY

The crystallization of the proposal was made possible through both a quantitative and a qualitative approach. From the quantitative cut, the study was the descriptive or survey type which was used in collecting the necessary information through the use of a questionnaire for the teachers. The method of data collection was basically the survey, so that the data obtained were analyzed through descriptive. The design of the research project was conducted from the research - Action with collaborative approach, which consists of a research process focused on understanding a specific phenomenon within its real life context, and this process usually involves multiple sources of information (Grinnell, 1997). In this regard, what is ideal is the research perspective that focuses its interest on analyzing and controlling how changes is produced in educational practices after using the Methodological Guide for assistance. This research process is promoted by the subjects themselves and then referred to action research, whose task is shared by groups of teachers, students, parents and staff.

![Figure No.1. Formative stage](image)

The proposed training stage (Fig. No. 1) takes its cue from the teachers’ lack of knowledge on Information Technology and Communication. In turn, the Ministry of Education is implementing the Colombia Bilingual program by 2019. This will definitely involve major changes in the course of English through the inclusion of ICT guidelines. This then became the ultimate bases for the construction of this methodological guide.

In this case, it was necessary to create a methodological proposal for incorporating Web 2.0 technologies into the process of English teaching by those who must take an active and collaborative role in the classroom and at the same time. It was continually thought that the effectiveness of the proposal depended on the analysis of the following phases:

- **Appropriation of the population and the scenario:**
  Four virtual mentor teachers were selected and trained by the National Distance Education University. The Students finished the online English course at A1, A2 and B1. The virtual classroom was transformed with the upgrading and acquisition of more equipment.

- **Qualitative data collection:** A survey of English teachers was conducted among institutions of the state as a data collection instrument.

- **Construction and application of the Methodological Guide for the generalization of the proposal:** At this stage a methodological guide was designed from the perspective of the teacher. The objectives laid out the guidelines to generate this product. A blog and YouTube served to revitalize the tools for developing Web 2.0 collaborative activities.

**Observation and Analysis of the Methodological Guide:** The students’ performances were recorded in the online course and collaborative activities. External experts validated the Guide.

4. POPULATION

The Escuela Normal Superior Bucaramanga, which is an institution of the state, and supported by the National Distance Education University, Florida, organized a "Inglés y Virtualidad Program," which sought to train students in levels A1, A2 and B1. The duration of this training was a period of three years from 2009 to 2011.

The pilot test began with 400 students from eighth grade in 2009, of which 385 remained in ninth grade and 340 students finished the tenth grade in 2011.

Regarding the teachers’ participation, the population was formed by four tutors who assumed the role of virtual teachers after an appropriated selection process and training. In addition to the aforementioned population, a support staff for the control and management of the virtual room was also included.

5. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The results obtained are described using three perspectives: the student’s, the tutors’ and the institution’s, where the use of the tools played an important role in the creation of collaborative activities. However, much more important that these, is how the pilot study integrated the Web 2.0 into the teaching of English and this was recorded in the methodological guide for teachers.

The students were highly motivated with the new training for English, the implementation of new strategies, and the development of virtual collaborative tasks in the virtual platform. In fact, at the end of 2011, 360 tenth grade students completed the course online at the B1 level according to the reference of the Common European Framework. The course included the components of Reading, Listening comprehension, Vocabulary, Grammar, Speaking, Pronunciation and Phonetics, and Writing.

Furthermore, the virtual tutors could get familiar with and thus, get trained in new types of technology through the application of the Methodological Guide. In this sense, there was significant progress in different aspects such as in the facilitation of communication among institutional participants, access to a large amount of specialized and updated information, change of the teachers’ role, enhancement of collaborative work, and strengthening of intercultural education.

The transformation of two-class scenarios was achieved in the institution. One of these scenarios uses electronic technology resources (TV, DVD, and VCR) for teaching at classrooms, and the other uses a virtual classroom (30 computers, wireless, air conditioning, adequate lighting and smart board). All these help facilitate the development of new working methods in the classroom as parameters shared in the Guide. In fact, both of these scenarios have a great potential for educational use in supporting the teacher's explanations as well as complementing their personal materials, their exposure to student digital work, and their material recovery of the explanations, exhibitions and activities.
On the whole, the investigation helped to build knowledge around the implementation of the B-Learning type, based on the experience of the Virtual program. This brought about a different dynamic on teachers, and with this, the Methodological Guide was developed and implemented as the end product (Figure # 2) from the perspective of the teacher. The purpose of the development of the Methodological Guide was to encourage the use of Web 2.0, with the results to highlight that include interactivity, accessibility, and information feedback. The last one allows the teacher - tutor to identify and control the situation if the student responds to the approach outlined in collaborative activities such as YouTube and blogs.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The inclusion of Information Technology and Communication in English language teaching changed the dynamics of classroom teaching into virtual learning for about 50%, where students manage time asynchronously, and where participatory and collaborative work becomes necessary to perform activities.

The student eagerly assumes b-learning modality because of being an active user of new technologies, and therefore, the student becomes the principal character of the teaching-learning process with the teacher as a mediator between ICT and the second language.

In the real panorama, the educators must gain space in the use of new technologies to achieve a match among students’ knowledge in order to produce a productive and motivating effect in the end.

To conclude, the following question emerges: Are today's teachers really prepared to guide the learning of the generations of the XXI century?

7. REFERENCES


