

Utilizing Social Networks as Learning Tools to Transform Education

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Abstract

Collaborative learning is made possible through the use of technological communication networks, which provide information sharing places to encourage teamwork. There is a growing trend in colleges across Spain and Latin America, especially in Mexico, to use social networks, one of the most emblematic Web 2.0 tools, to teach students about the history and appeal of the Internet. There was a research done with 414 students from the 14 majors provided at the University of Guadalajara's Los Altos University Center to investigate the efficacy of social networking as a means of education. Seventy-one percent of respondents said they use them for school-related activities; 45 percent use them to study; and 42 percent use them to play, all of which highlights the growing role and influence that social networks are playing in the classroom.

Keywords: *Social Network, Education, Collaborative Learning.*



A. INTRODUCTION

Given the social panorama that has caused the digital revolution of the Web and the expansion of numerous types of social networks or virtual communities, it has been increasingly notorious to use them continuously to find out about news, participate in the purchase and sale of various products, receive information, network, play games and perform professional collaboration activities, as well as chat and share various hobbies. Hence, the environment in which we develop has radically changed in the way we communicate and education does not escape this.

Due to the above, it is necessary to modify the roles of teachers and students, which implies the adaptation of teaching and learning strategies that include Web 2.0 and its various tools, as a transcendent part of educational practices. Social networks have become a tool that allows collaborative learning and involves spaces for exchanging information that encourage cooperation.

One of the challenges of current education must be to rebuild the educational space and adapt it to a society that is subject to continuous change. Social networks, which constitute one of the most representative tools of Web 2.0, should not be ignored for their study, since their roots and fascination in students are an enormous didactic possibility, since the axis of all of them is ascribed to interaction and ability to respond and communicate quickly and eloquently (Artero, 2011).

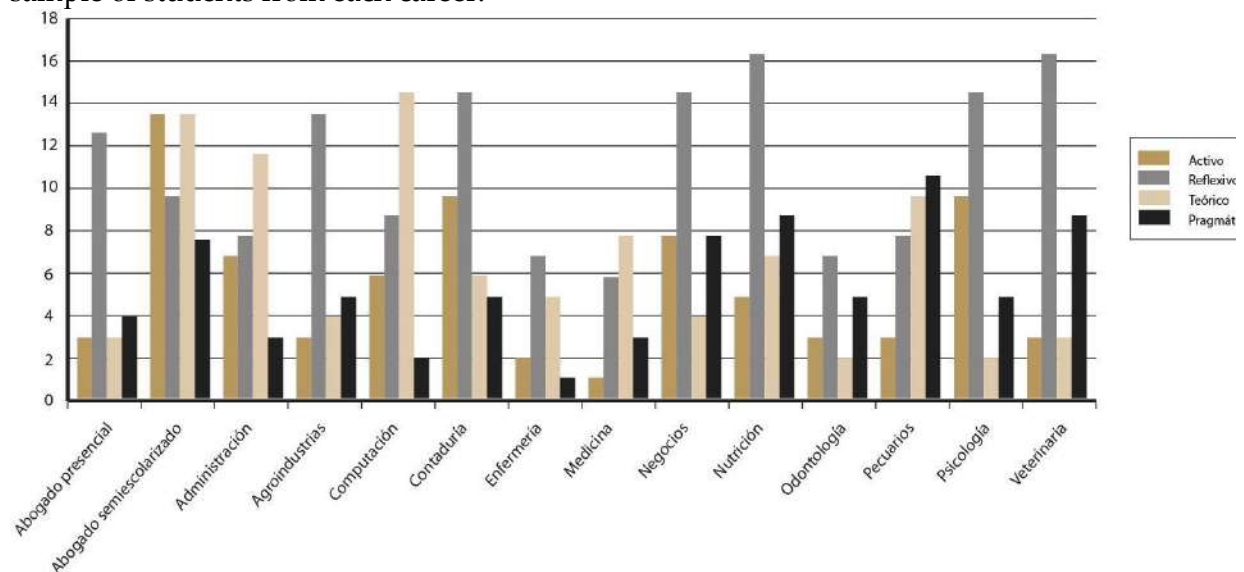
This article discloses the use of social networks as a learning strategy by students of the Los Altos University Center (CUAltos) of the University of Guadalajara, whose information is part of the research project "Diagnosis of the teaching process - learning in mixed training modalities in the CUAltos". The intention is to show how students have been incorporating the use of social networks into their educational practice and relate it to their learning style and channel of perception, their determination in the use of the tools that Web 2.0 provides them, as well how do they handle them.

B. METHOD

This research uses qualitative research. According to Creswell (2016), qualitative research methods explore and understand the intentions of a number of individuals or groups of people who come from social problems. Qualitative research is often used in research on people's lives, behavior, history, and others. Researchers use descriptive qualitative research methods with an inductive approach so that researchers can analyze and describe the phenomenon of the researcher's research entirely and coherently based on the facts obtained so that researchers can draw meaningful research conclusions. In this study, researchers collect data by conducting interviews (interviews), observations (observation), and documentation (taking notes). While the data analysis techniques used are data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From the instrument applied to the 414 students, the following results were obtained: in the learning style there is a tendency to the reflective type, since 46 percent of the sample coincided in this classification, followed by the active and theoretical, with 24 and 23 percent, respectively; Regarding the perception channel, 49 percent is of the kinesthetic type, while 45 percent is visual and only 19 percent is auditory. Graph 1 shows the learning styles of the sample of students from each career.



Graph 1. Learning styles.

The results on the activities that students carry out with social networks for learning purposes are shown in graph 2. It stands out that 59.36 percent commented that they almost always talk with their classmates through messages or chat about class work or homework;

55.42 chose that they rarely publish contents of a specific subject; instead, 52.71 expressed that they almost always use them to publish general information; 54.43 publish links to sites referring to subjects or research topics consistent with their career.

Similarly, 77.83 percent said they never post links to collaborative sites, such as CmapTools, MindMeister, GoogleDocs or SkyDrive; while 75.37, never disclose links to videos made by themselves with topics related to their subjects.

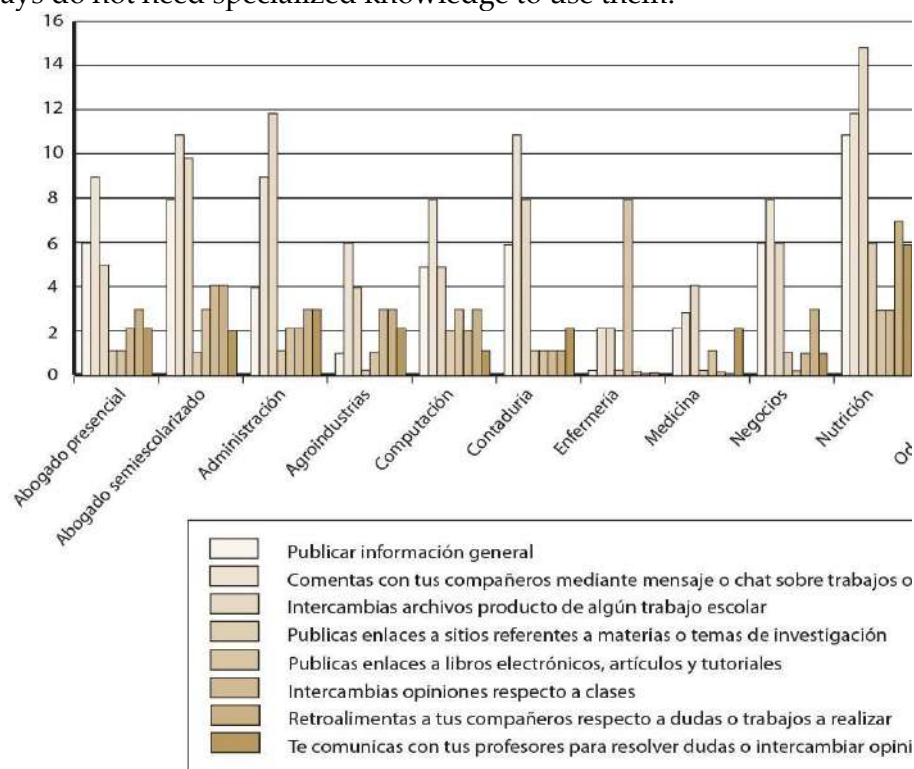
Graph 2 shows that Nutrition students are the ones who carry out more activities on social networks for learning purposes, followed by those in the semi-schooled Lawyer career,

who would be expected to make greater use of these tools, since the modality in which they study is mixed.

Veterinary, Administration, Accounting and Computing students also show a high tendency in the use of social networks for learning purposes. From the perception of the students and the experience they have in the exchange and communication with their teachers through social networking sites, they expressed that the majority of teachers do not use these tools for teaching purposes, because according to statistics derived from the instrument, 46.67 percent almost always publish contents of a specific subject; however, 69.63 never they disclose links to collaborative sites and 54.07 also do not publish links to electronic books, articles or tutorials.

In this sense, it is observed that there is an important opportunity for teachers to decide to use these interaction spaces with a well-defined task or project, in which they turn social networks into places for collaborative work that promote student autonomy.

The questions of the instrument related to the benefits that the students perceive to have with the use of social networks, 67.73 percent answered that they almost always find what they need to communicate through the same site, while 75.12 percent thought that the networks allow them to communicate without problems of space or time and 71.18, which almost always do not need specialized knowledge to use them.



Graph 2. Activities carried out on social networks for learning purposes

When asked about the social networks they use and the frequency with which they do so, 57 percent said they always use Facebook, 28.74 percent said they use YouTube, and 6.5 percent said they only occasionally use Twitter.

41.42% of students said that when they use social networks, they are always distracted from school activities. 24.75% of students responded that they almost always spend too much time with them without any benefit. 26.23% of students consider that there is no privacy with the use of this means of communication. When asked about the disadvantages that students

consider that the use of social networks brings them, 41.42% of students said that when they use social networks, they are always distracted from school activities.

It was determined through the application of the non-parametric Chi2 test, which had a degree of reliability of 5%, that there is no dependence between these two variables. With this information, it is possible to draw the conclusion that students use social networks regardless of the learning styles that they have because there is no dependence between these two variables.

D. CONCLUSION

It is possible to draw the conclusion that social networks are becoming a tool that enables the development of communication skills and can be used as a learning strategy by students. This is because the majority of students use social networks almost constantly, despite the fact that they do not believe they do so. despite the fact that they are a part of their academic activities, there is no discernible advantage that comes from participating in them. On the other hand, students get the impression that their teachers only utilize these tools for general queries, which leads them to believe that their teachers do not use these tools for the goal of teaching.

We concur with Artero (2011) that the management of a social network in the classroom has the potential to lead to a rapprochement between the instructor and the student. Social networks were built from the ground up with the intention of fostering interaction, and this newly created forum for conversation can serve as a venue for education and the promotion of mutual enrichment. On the one hand, the instructor intervenes, modifies, and collaborates in the learning process with his students; he may even use the networks to glean information about the diverse learning styles that coexist in the students' classroom as well as the evaluation of the students' individual and collective behavior. One definition of a learning strategy is "the set of operations, steps, strategies, and routines employed by students to ease getting, storing, retrieving, and utilising knowledge when learning." Social networks have the potential to become a learning strategy (Carranza, 2011).

If the preceding is taken into consideration, the networks would become an educational transformation that would allow for a space for dialogue and foster learning and mutual enrichment between teachers and students; that is, a place where interaction, individuality, and multiculturalism are respected and, at the same time, enrich collaborative learning and promote the metacognition of the actors with activities that lead to self-assessment or reflection on the work that was carried out. If the above is taken into consideration, the networks would become an educational transformation that would Teachers can utilize networks as a methodological tool because they feed their own training from practice and involvement in projects, in addition to being an observer, follower, and mediator of student activity. Networks feed their own training from practice and participation in projects.

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