Poster presentation

Blending synchronous and asynchronous forms of communication in an online teacher education class

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Educational settings in tertiary institutions these days are often constituted by characteristics that address the specific needs of today's culture. One of these needs is the notion of being free of time and place constraints. Typical scenarios resulting from such needs are distributed group settings whose communication and collaboration is supported by technology. This paper focuses on the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in a teacher education class. We will describe the flexible implementation of chat rooms and discussion forums as communication means in computer-supported learning settings. Special emphasis is placed on students' perceptions of media usage and their development as the learning process unfolds. Initial results show that a low level of ICT experience as well as ICT usage in private settings do not provide a sufficient skill set to cope with ICT usage in learning settings. We underestimated the initial low level of ICT acceptance as well as participants' difficulties to adapt existing ICT skills from private usage to application in learning settings. The occurring difficulties are not an exceptional phenomenon in teacher education in higher education institutions. Special attention has to be paid to particular needs of students in teacher education.

Keywords: CSCL, computer-mediated communication, synchronous chat, asynchronous discussion forum, teacher education

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