Developing an Integrated Environment for Cooperative Learning

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Abstract

The present paper presents the Learn&Web Project that has the objective of being an integrated environment for the cooperative learning in Internet; a place for the intimacy and the exchange of experiences, where the knowledge can be shared among the peers. The major compromise of Learn&Web is the creation of an online community, active, reflexive and ready to collaborate within an innovative way so that it becomes an useful, qualitative and adequate educational environment to the Brazilian reality and on a continuous improvement.

Introduction

The Internet with all its technologies on information, communication and cooperation provides great opportunities for the Education. The navigation through the Internet can promote the incidental learning which is quite advisable and useful but it is necessary and feasible to provide an organized environment where the learning process is not submitted to the contingencies of the fortuity. However, how to learn within an organized way not only the curriculum and extracurricular contents but also to develop cognitive meta-skills such as decision making, formulation of hypotheses, analysis, synthesis and evaluation? How to learn to interact, to communicate and to cooperate on distance? How to learn to participate as a contemporaneous citizen of a virtual community in the new Information Society? Some of such questions have already answers. During year 1998, it was developed an experimental and testing site, based on DCL - Distance Cooperative Learning [1] that inspired the actual Learn@Web Project.

Summary Environment Description

Learn&Web is an integrated and opened environment for the cooperative learning and a space for the companionship and exchange of experiences where the knowledges can be shared among the peers in the social-historical-cultural Brazilian content. This environment is a place for the collective and cooperative work based in Vigotsky's social-historical-cultural theory [1], and has some goals: a) to apply the information, communication and cooperative technologies available in the Internet to the process of teaching and learning within a consistent and innovative way for both pedagogical and technological aspects, b) to develop courses on distance supported by the Internet, applying new methodologies of learning that meet different users, c) to create a Brazilian multicultural community whose interest is driven to the segment of the Internet in the Education, d) to create the culture of the collective and cooperative of the learning construction among the environment participants and e) to evaluate the results obtained during this process of teaching and learning. The environment follows a line of action, which concentrates its development in new paradigms addressed to the improvement of the Brazilian educational system. It also provides updating and improvement of first and second grades teachers of the public and private schools network that offers a renovation of curricular contents and pedagogical procedures such as courses of Education on distance and the use of the Internet resources and setting and diffusion of the tech-educational materials for the dichotic planning that support the docent practices linked to cooperative projects.

Conclusions

Learn&Web is presently in the phase of setting up its visual identity and is being as far as possible developed based on the Places Theory [2]. This theory is based in a special metaphor to situate actions and interactions occurred inside an integrated work context. Therefore, each space is constituted by a virtual space parameter that will provide
the interaction places. The navigation in the environment is being modeled as a hypertext, however close to the linear with the objective of guaranteeing the participant' self-orientation and to avoid the cognitive overload that normally occurs in sites organized in knob networks. It is expected that Learn&Web opens a differential and innovative space in the Brazilian Educational System to provide a paradigm change as regards the attitude in relation to what is to learn and teach in Internet, to permit the development of a critical and reflexive conscience of the virtual community that will be being formed with the participation of children, young persons and adults, including teachers and to prepare participate citizens subject and transformers to act in the Information Society.

**Bibliography**