

Application of ICT to language learning and teaching at Reykjavík University. Presentation of a case study: learning Spanish through blogging

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Abstract

This paper sets out the application of ICT to language learning and teaching at Reykjavík University in the undergraduate and postgraduate programs and the interest of this institution in investing resources in new technologies as a way of giving the students the possibility of developing ICT skills that will be necessary for their professional future. Including the application of new technologies in our language programs (with special emphasis on the new social platforms) means to bring the real world to our courses and let us to be more connected with other learning communities. This point is specially important for and isolated and small country as Iceland, where the opportunities for our students of practicing their language skills with native speakers or other students are very limited.

Also, an overview of the educational system in Iceland focused on the application of new technologies in the field of languages will be presented in order to give a general perspective of the situation.

Moreover, the results of a recent study will be presented. This study reports the attitudes of students of Business Spanish at Reykjavík University towards the use of Weblogs in the classroom as a learning and evaluation tool in an university level course. Results obtained from a questionnaire distributed at the end of the course to know students opinions and perceptions after creating collectively a class blog during spring semester 2009. This study also addresses if the level of accuracy these students achieve is related to the fact that their comments and thoughts can be read and shared with other students. A consideration about Weblogs, as a collaborative asincronic tool, providing autonomy to the student's learning process will be offered as well.

Finally, this paper will analyze the potential of the Weblogs as a pedagogic tool for collaboration online in international projects and as an example, two different projects Reykjavík University is involved in at the moment will be presented. One of them belongs to the educational net Nordplus and the other one came up as a result from one of the International workshops organized by the ECML in Graz in February 2009.