



Web 2.0 Technologies and Building Online Learning Communities: Students' Perspectives

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Abstract:

The purpose of this action research was to explore students' perspectives regarding using Web 2.0 technologies to develop a community of learners. The course described in this study was a fully online course in an Educational Learning Technologies master's program at a medium-sized university in the U.S. Southwest. A variety of Web 2.0 tools (Twitter, Google Docs, Skype, blogs, and wikis) were used throughout the course to enhance students' sense of community. The methods of data collection in this study included students' reflective journaling activities, the researcher's journal and field notes, and students' comments on each other's reflections. Students indicated that using Google Docs, wikis, blogs, and Twitter gave them a sense of a learning community while using Skype did not. Google Docs and wikis had the most impact on students' sense of a learning community in the course. Findings suggest that faculty interested in building learning communities in online environments need to use variety of Web 2.0 technologies in order to make students aware of those technologies' promise for supporting communication.

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