

# Web 2.0 as a pedagogical strategy in the process of English language teaching-learning<sup>1</sup>

Web 2.0 como estrategia pedagógica en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del inglés

## Abstract

This article summarizes the results of the macro research project entitled "Interaction between ICT and bilingual teaching as a functional learning alternative", carried out at the Escuela Normal Superior de Bucaramanga from 2010 to 2012 by students of the Basic Education program with emphasis in Spanish and English, Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia, Bucaramanga. This proposal emphasized only Web 2.0, specifically developing the working platform of the English and Virtuality program at the Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia, Florida; we used YouTube and blogs as educational tools. The main goal of the process was to get teachers to use new technologies in their teaching processes.

## Keywords

B-learning, didactics of English, elementary education, teacher, Web 2.0 technologies.

## Resumen

Este artículo resume los resultados de investigación del macroproyecto titulado "Interacción entre las TIC y la enseñanza del bilingüismo como alternativas funcionales del aprendizaje" realizado en la Escuela Normal Superior de Bucaramanga entre el segundo semestre del 2010 y el primer semestre del 2012, a cargo de las estudiantes de Licenciatura en Educación Básica con Énfasis en Humanidades, Lengua Castellana e Inglés de la Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia, sede Bucaramanga. Esta propuesta hace énfasis en el uso de la Web 2.0, desarrollada en la plataforma virtual para la enseñanza del inglés de la Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia, Florida; se hace uso de YouTube y de *blogs* como herramientas educativas. El objetivo final: conseguir que los docentes hagan uso de las nuevas tecnologías en su ámbito educativo.

## Palabras clave

B-learning, didáctica del inglés, educación básica, maestro, Web 2.0.

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<sup>1</sup> Artículo de investigación derivado del proyecto de investigación "Interacción entre las TIC y la enseñanza en el bilingüismo como alternativas funcionales del aprendizaje", realizado en la Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia, sede Bucaramanga.

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## Introduction

Since long ago, the speed at which knowledge multiplies, as well as its transformation into information and the need to have it quickly available to streamline processes have been recognized. This fact requires the inclusion of strategies and tools provided by new technologies applied to education.

Given this panorama, there is a priority in forming teachers competent in the mentioned subject, all of them capable of using ICT in teaching a second language and of acting as citizens of a modern and multicultural society.

The aim of this project is to create a methodological proposal for the incorporation of Web 2.0 technologies into teaching and learning English at the Escuela Normal Superior in the city of Bucaramanga, starting from teacher training as Boza (2007) and Lopez (2007) proposed. To illustrate this purpose, collaborative 2.0 learning activities are built to yield a product consisting of a specific Methodology Guide, from where English teachers can draw different possibilities of working with ICT.

## Web 2.0: generalities

With the passing of time, these technologies have evolved and have become what we now know as Web 2.0 tools. This term was first used by Dale Dougherty and Craig Cline, subsequently by Tim O'Reilly in 2004 who defined it as the second generation in developing and designing websites. Web 2.0 facilitates communication, exchange of information under safe parameters, inter-operability, and collaboration among users, making them active cooperators of the website.

## Web 2.0 and education

The sites under a Web 2.0 design are dynamic, they offer information hosting for users and also make use of multiple applications, so they are ideal for

creating information in collaboration with others, organizing social networks, video and photo sharing, wikis, blogs, podcasts, and folksonomies, among other benefits.

There is no doubt that the design of Web 2.0 tools is becoming more useful and can also be applied in teaching English as a versatile and varied process. We have seen learners are starting to use Web services offered by some providers at an impressive pace, there is an endless array of free tools and applications on the network that teachers should take advantage of combining them with each other. Among these we can name: wikis, blogging, micro blogging sites, social markers or tags (social book-marking), and spaces for storing and sharing videos, photos, audio, images, PowerPoint presentations, documents, spreadsheets, maps, RSS, etc. It is difficult to establish which of them are in greater demand, use or importance, as they all offer information and communication options, and they all are potentially useful; for the moment being we have decided to focus on blogs and YouTube as a supported implementation of these tools.

## Integration of ICT in teaching practice

The Department of Education of Victoria, Australia proposes three stages in which the teacher passes the integration of ICT. The first stage is the exploration of new possibilities that technologies offer for learning, developing new skills and understanding the role that ICT can play in the classroom. The second is the development of personal skills and the incorporation of ICT in teaching and developing classroom practices that integrate learning technologies. The third one develops advanced skills, exploring innovative ways to use class technology and sharing knowledge and skills with others.

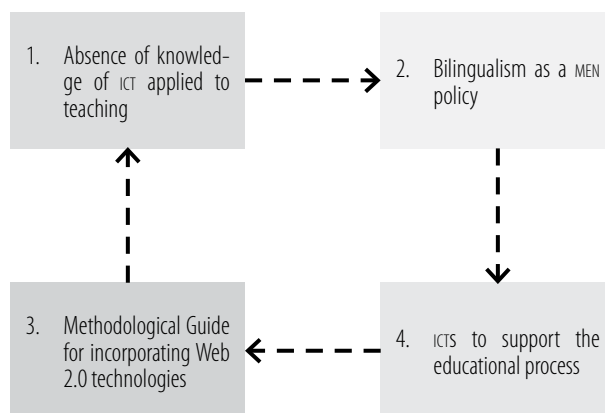
Thus the use of new technologies is not a particular phenomenon, but a joint activity in the academic life of educational institutions.

## Methodology

To work on the concept of Web 2.0, we proposed the advances of Arteta (2009), who gives us ways to understand the applications and services for the acquisition of abilities. We also checked the advances of Fernández (2008) with his 43 proposals to work with the Web 2.0 in class. Santamaría (2005) talks about some Web 2.0 tools such as: Weblogs, Social networks, and Wikis.

The crystallization of the proposal was created from a quantitative and qualitative approach. From the quantitative cut, the study was descriptive; a survey was used to collect the necessary information with the application of a questionnaire to the teachers. Obtained data was analyzed through descriptive statistics and then allowed us to present the information under the support of this approach. To give substance to the qualitative area, the teachers held a group interview to validate the proposed methodological guide, this interview was recorded on video. the students' performance was registered through observation and recording of their tasks, work, and activities on the platform of the *English and Virtuality* program.

The design of the project was conducted from the research "Action with collaborative approach" by Mendez (2005), which consists of a research process focused on understanding a specific phenomenon within its real life context, usually involving multiple sources of information, some of these contexts can be in alternative situations (Cifuentes, 2010), or in rural ones (Munevar, 2008). In this regard, we chose a research perspective that focuses on the analysis and control of the way changes in educational practices occur after using the Methodological Guide to help. This research process is promoted by the subjects themselves and then referred to action research and shared by groups of teachers, students, parents, and staff.



**Figure 1.** Formative stage

Source: the author

The training stage that was proposed (figure 1), starts from the teachers' absence of knowledge on Information and Communication Technologies. In turn, the Ministry of Education will implement the Colombia Bilingüe (Bilingual Colombia) program by 2019, this involves major changes in English teaching as the inclusion of ICT guidelines that led to the construction of this methodological guide.

In this case, we need to create a methodological proposal for incorporating Web 2.0 technologies to English teaching having those who must take an active and collaborative role in the classroom as a part of the creation process. At the same time we permanently considered the effectiveness of the proposal through the analysis of the following phases:

*Appropriation of population and scenario.* The four virtual mentor teachers were selected and trained by the Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia. The Students finished the online English course on levels A1, A2 and B1. The virtual classroom was transformed by upgrading it and with the acquisition of more equipment.

*Qualitative data collection.* We applied the survey to English teachers from state institutions as a data collection instrument.

*Construction and application of the Methodological Guide for the generalization of the proposal.* At this stage, a methodological guide was designed from the perspective of the teacher. The objectives laid out the guidelines to generate this product. The blog and YouTube served to revitalize the tools for developing Web 2.0 collaborative activities.

*Observation and Analysis of the Methodological Guide.* The students' performance in the online course and collaborative activities was registered. External experts validated the Guide.

### Population

The Escuela Normal Superior in the city of Bucaramanga, which is an state institution supported by the Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia, Florida, organized an "English and Virtuality" program, which was to train students in levels A1, A2 and B1. This training lasted for three years, from 2009 to 2011.

The pilot test began with 400 students from eighth grade in 2009, of which 385 remained in ninth grade and 340 students finished in tenth grade in 2011.

Regarding teacher participation the population was formed by four tutors who assumed the role of virtual teachers after a proper selection and training process.

In addition to the mentioned population, support staff for the control and management of the virtual room was also included.

### Results and analysis

The obtained results are described using three perspectives, the student's, the tutors' and the institution's. The use of the tools played an important

role in the creation of collaborative activities but the most important is how the process integrated the Web 2.0 English teaching; this was recorded in the methodological guide for teachers.

The students were highly motivated with the new English training, implementing new strategies and developing virtual collaborative tasks in the virtual platform. At the end of 2011, 360 tenth grade students completed the online course at the B1 level according to the Common European Framework, which includes the components of Reading, Listening comprehension, Vocabulary, Grammar, Speaking, Pronunciation and Phonetics, and Writing.

On the other hand, the virtual tutors could familiarize with, and thus got trained in, new technologies through the application of the Methodological Guide. In this sense, there was a significant progress in different aspects such as: ease of communication among institutional participants, access to a large amount of specialized and updated information, change of the teachers' role, enhancement of collaborative work, and strengthening of intercultural education.

The transformation of two class scenarios was achieved in the institution. One of them uses electronic technology resources (TV, DVD, and VCR) for teaching in classrooms, and the other one is the virtual classroom (30 repower equipment, wireless, air conditioning, adequate lighting, and smart board), all this to facilitate the development of new working methods in the classroom. We shared these parameters in the Guide, showing how they have a great potential for educational use in supporting teacher explanations and complementing their personal materials, their exposure to student digital work, and their material recovery of the explanations, exhibitions, and activities.



**Figure 2.** Front cover of the product

Source: the author

The investigation helped build knowledge around the implementation of the b-learning type, based on the experience of the Virtual program, which brought a different dynamic for teachers, and the Methodological Guide was developed and implemented as the end product (figure 2) from the perspective of teachers to encourage the use of Web 2.0. The results that must be highlighted are interactivity, accessibility, and information feedback —which allows the teacher or tutor to identify and control the student's response to the approach employed collaborative activities such as YouTube and blogs. We can find different experiences according to the population that gets the benefits, no matter if they are children (Díaz, 2006), or adults (Salinas, 2004).

## Conclusions

The inclusion of Information and Communication Technologies in English language teaching changed the dynamics of classroom teaching into virtual learning in about a 50%. With this new approach students manage time asynchronously, and participatory and collaborative work becomes necessary to perform activities.

Students eagerly assume the b-learning modality because they are active users of new technologies, and therefore become the main element of the teaching-learning process, with the teacher as a mediator between ICT and the second language.

In the real panorama, educators must become proficient in the use of new technologies to match the students' use of these technologies so that their effect is productive and motivating in the end.

To conclude the following question arises: Are today's teachers really prepared to guide the learning of the generations of the XXI century?

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