

Trainees' Perceptions On Using Microblog To Support Formative Evaluation:
A Q- Methodology Study

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify the perceptions of trainees on using the Web 2.0 application Twitter for formative evaluation. Twitter was integrated in a Research Methodology classroom at a continuing education center of a private university in Taipei for twelve weeks. Q-methodology was used for this study. Thirty-nine participants were surveyed and asked to rank-order 30 statements about the integration of Twitter in the classroom. Correlation, centroid factor analysis, and judgmental rotation were employed to derive significant factors. Two factors that represent groups of participants with similar perceptions were extracted. The results of this research have illustrated the following: (1) all of the participants agreed on the importance of online formative evaluation, (2) trainee opinion types can be differentiated into Factor I (Full-Range Adopters) and Factor II (Twitter-Critical Adopters), and (3) Factor I and Factor II participants agreed that the integration of Twitter into the classroom enhanced learning through the use of critical reflections, privacy settings, prompt responses, and writing without restraint due to the anonymity of the evaluation. The findings indicate that perception on using Microblog to support formative evaluation is a multidimensional construct rather than a uni-dimensional one. It concludes that the usage of Web 2.0 application in the classroom is no longer "one size fits all," but rather multiple social media tools should be used in order to meet different learners' needs and preferences.

Keyword : Summative Evaluation, Formative Evaluation, Microblog, Social Network, Twitter