

Virtual rooms: *b-learning* taking into account specific needs in Physics learning at the University. *Monzon, P., Schenoni, G., Viñuela, M. (2009) (VI Encuentro Nacional y III Latinoamericano "La universidad como objeto de investigación" , Córdoba, Argentina, 12-14 noviembre de 2009.*

Summary

This paper analyzes a didactic experience whose context was that of the Virtual Rooms of the subjects Physics I and Physics II of the National Technological University – Regional Faculty of Buenos Aires. This has been the first opportunity in which institutional Virtual Rooms were implemented in this faculty. Given that their objective is to complement face to face classes they fall into the b-learning model frame, integrating face to face and distance learning.

Virtual Rooms comprise general information about the subjects (syllabus, schedule, important dates), theoretical material on some of the contents, a chat for students and tutorial rooms (virtual forums).

In this paper, we will analyze interactions in the physics virtual forum, taking into consideration students' building of knowledge and the aid provided by teachers mediated both by the language characteristic of the virtual setting and by the specific contents of physics.

It has been observed that in these virtual rooms, most students participate as "observers" (lurkers). In general, these students "who read", partake of the platform but leave no visible evidence, do not make contributions, check out the administrative news, read other students' and/or teachers' questions and answers, and consult material available in the platform.

On the other hand, there are other students, "active participants", among whose interactions we find doubts correctly and incorrectly posed, possible appropriate and inappropriate solutions, genuine questions and confirmation questions.

In our analysis, we have found out that these participations bear out the specific needs and methods of studying the subject, which can be addressed thank to this virtual tool. From the wording of doubts; previous knowledge; and ways of thinking problems, students' interventions allow for the joint reflection on problem solving and its relation with theory. Students and tutors create a dynamic context in which language and

conversation are at the service of the cooperative solution of tasks, joint thinking and of making the knowledge of physics meaningful.

It could be concluded that virtual platforms, as complements of face-to-face classes, which undoubtedly increase and make the opportunities for consulting and learning more flexible, are better taken advantage of, specially, by certain students with specific requirements.