Use of Twitter for formative evaluation: Reflections on trainer and trainees' experiences

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify the perceptions of trainers and 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. Thirty-nine participants were recruited for this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted one week after the completion of the program in order to understand the trainer and the trainees' perceptions. Qualitative data (i.e. filed notes, chat logs and interview transcripts) were collected from in-depth interviews, participation and observation with the trainees. Thematic analysis was used for data analysis. Four main themes emerged from the analyses of the interview transcripts: (1) trainees/ trainer relationships, (2) effects of class rules and policies, (3) classroom management, and (4) contrasting features of traditional and Twitter-supported formative evaluation. The results indicate that critical reflections, self-regulation, prompt responses, online disinhibition behaviors and expeditious modification of this program can enhance learning. The findings reaffirm the importance of online formative evaluation in underpinning course pedagogy; however, a number of minor, foreseeable issues still need to be resolved.

Keyword：Formative Evaluation, Microblog, Social Network, Twitter