Facebook as an Extension e-Classroom in Teacher Education Course

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Abstract
The study was conducted to explore and describe the use of free social platform as a means of creating virtual teaching and learning space for college students. Using content analysis, it described the posts and interactions in the extension e-classroom (using Facebook Group Account) in the Social Dimensions of Education class involving the total enumeration of 30 students and one teacher in Bicol University College of Education during the second semester of school year 2010-2011. Findings reveal that posts were varied but dominated by textual posts while the interactions were either teacher-student, student-student and student-teacher dominated by student-student interactions. The virtual discussion platform generally provided students opportunity to share information and give comments and reactions, and the teacher opportunity to provide additional instructional materials which evoked reflective learning.   The class can be considered as active participants in the extension e-classroom with half of it described either as having high or moderate extent of participation. The posts of the students are highly or moderately comprehensive, significant and relevant, and served as authentic evidence of students' application of both computer and high order thinking skills.
The proposed policy can serve as a guide for facilitating effective use of web tools like social network for instructional purposes, and for ensuring that ethical considerations are given premium, and may be considered as guide for policy formulation in the college or university.

Keywords: asynchronous discussion, blended learning, social network, teacher education, ubiquitous learning

1. Introduction

Education has been revolutionized by technology. Its major impact on education for decades is evidently shown by changes in both content and delivery of education across levels and disciplines. Schools, to be relevant, competitive and up-to-date, need to make learning experiences adapted to the continual changes brought about by advancement of technology.

Notwithstanding the potential threat that irresponsible use of technology by students and teachers may bring, it is interesting to note that technology has made cutting-edge changes in the way education is planned and delivered to the clients. Technology has undeniably significantly influenced learning as an integrated, dynamic, interactive process that enables an individual to meet his needs, or fulfill his goals and interests. It is needless to say that the delivery of lessons has been transformed by the availability of internet. Internet has not only made access to a great reservoir of knowledge easy and fast, but it has also led to a dramatic change in the way lessons are delivered, that is, e-learning or open and distance learning, and mobile learning. Internet has led to the creation of social networking sites. In fact, social networking has become a prevalent occurrence recently. This technological trend does not only make communication easy and fast despite distance, but it has also changed the learning behaviors of the students. The Net Generation students are more experiential, engaged and connected (Ramley& Zia, 2005, as cited by Sham, 2014) so they prefer to use technology for learning (Carlson, 2005 as cited by Shams, 2014).

Facebook, one of the most widely used social network with 1.23 billion users worldwide. Kiss (2014), has 30 million users in the Philippines (www.gethooked360.com,

2013). Raacke & Raacke (2013) noted a very high rate of general use of social network with Facebook being the most popular. Prior studies reveal the usefulness of using social networks in instruction such as in enhancing student learning, satisfaction and sense of connectedness (Barczyk& Duncan, 2012), promoting contructivist learning through meaningful communication, providing motivational platform, encouraging, liberating and engaging students in collaborative learning, and providing flexible, repeatable, convenient and accessible educational tool (Woo, Herrington, Agostinho& Reeves, 2007; Greenhow, Robelia& Hughes, 2009; Liaw, Chen& Huang, 2008; Zaidieh, 2012 as cited by Shams, 2014).

In the Philippines, e-learning and blended learning system in all curricular programs in the Bicol University is yet to be formalized. Admittedly, a number of teachers and students take advantage of technology in the delivery of the coursework though internet usage, use of software to facilitate learning and teaching such powerpoint, webquests, excels and other easily available softwares. Generally, however, face-to-face is not yet complemented or supplemented by an e-classroom. The free use of social networking site such as Facebook as a possible venue of enrichment lessons is not yet widely explored. Taking advantage of the students' preference and skill to use web tools and social media such as Facebook, the teacher may introduce innovation in the delivery of coursework in order to be relevant and responsive to the learning modalities and preferences of students without neglecting the quality.

In the context of the inevitable impact of technological advancements on education, the need to address development of proficiency and fluency with the tools of technology as one of the 21st century competencies (NCTE, 2008; www.p21.org, 2009) and in response to the priority researches for ICT and social change under social sciences (Commission on Higher Education Memorandum Order (CHED) Order No. 41, series 2010, the Philippines), this study was conducted to provide insights to students and teachers to take advantage of existing social platforms which can be used for educational purposes.

2. Objectives

This paper generally aims to explore and describe the use of free social platforms as a means of creating a virtual teaching and learning space for college students. It also includes documentation of the learning interactions in the virtual classroom as an extension e-classroom in a Teacher Education course. Specifically, it explored the following research: (1) Identify the kinds posts and extent of participation in the e-classroom using Facebook Closed Group Account, and the kinds and frequency of interaction of the users of the Facebook closed group account; (2) Identify computer skill and high-order thinking skills of users as revealed by the posts of student users; and (3) Propose policy on the use of free social platforms as classroom extension or as an alternative means of submitting course requirements.

3. Materials and Methods

This study used descriptive research method in order to describe the Facebook closed account as an extension of the classroom. In particular, it utilized content analysis to identify the kinds of posts, the extent of participation, and the kinds and frequency of interaction of the users of the Facebook closed account, and analyze the posts of the student users in terms of content, significance, relevance to the course, and usefulness in gauging course ratings.

The subjects were the total enumeration of the students of the Education 6 class composed of 30 BSED II students of Bicol University College of Education enrolled during semester of second school year 2010-2011. All these students had their active account in the social network (Facebook) prior to the course, and claimed to be active Facebook users.

Frequency count and percentage were used to describe the types of posts and the interaction of students in the extension e-classroom. The extent of participation of the students are classified as high (11 and above posts), moderate (6-10 posts), low (1-5 posts) or no participation (0 post). Qualitative analysis of data pertaining to the posts of the students as evidences of their participation in the extension e-classroom was conducted.

4. Results and Discussion

The e-classroom for the course Education 6 – Social Dimensions of Education, a virtual discussion platform as extension of traditional classroom, was created using a free social network, that is, Facebook closed group account with the subject professor as the administrator. The subject professor added some students of the class to initially open the group account, and thereafter the first batch of members added their classmates upon the request of the subject professor.

The e-classroom for Education 6 using Facebook closed group account served as an extension of the regular classroom which enabled asynchronous discussion between teacher and students and among students beyond the regular class schedules. This clearly shows that the Facebook was used for academic purpose similar to Donlan's (2014) finding that the students reported using Facebook for academic purpose notably peer-peer communication around group work and assessment. This virtual extended classroom allows teacher to reach more learners (Loureiro& Bettencourt, 2013). Since this e-classroom was used in addition to the conventional classroom, a blended type of learning approach was utilized. Considering Diaz& Brown's (2010) variations of blended learning programs, the Education 6 class employed Minimal Technology/Media with the use of Facebook Closed Group Account as an extension e-classroom.

The aim of using web-based social networks in the learning process is to have a virtual environment where learners can meet, share, discuss and learn outside the physical classroom (OpenInn2.0 Core Modules of the e-Assessment Model, University of Porto, 2013). The extension e-classroom for Education 6 was created to augment the discussion face-to-face interaction, and allow the students, together with the teacher to share and discuss issues related to the topics covered in the course Social Dimensions of Education through various media. In addition, this extension e-classroom also aimed to ensure connection between the teacher and the students, and among the students in case of class interruptions, official businesses of the teacher, or absence of students or teacher from the class. This extension e-classroom also served as platform for announcements or reminders, questions, and even submission of projects or group outputs.

Through web-based social networks, the teacher is given the opportunity to create a virtual class that works along the real one, being constantly updated with multimedia contents in a structured way. Through this, the teacher can still interact with the single student and reply to questions or doubts; and create a public space for questions and answers (OpenInn2.0, 2013). In the virtual classroom, the teacher can fulfill his role of being facilitator, moderator or guide of learning. In the case of the extension e-classroom

for Education 6, the teacher was still able to perform his role as a teacher without creating inhibition from the students and according to her convenient location or time.

Interaction of the Learners in the e-Classroom

Technological skills are important not only for children at schools but also for lifelong learning (European Commission, 2008 as cited in OpenInn2.0. Core Modules of the e-Assessment Model, University of Porto, 2013). These technological skills are shown through the use of simple web tools like social networking, and through the use of internet as sources of materials for sharing and discussion in a virtual learning space. The competence in the use of technology will help contribute to the digital literacy of the students, thus help in making them 21st century learners (Alberta Ed, 2011).

Kinds of Posts

The kinds of posts are divided into three categories; namely, 1) Textual Posts which include questions, answers, comments, information for comments, announcements/reminders, and course requirements (e.g. homework or activity); 2) Multimedia Posts which include photos from the internet, personal photos, personal videos and videos from the internet; and 3) References which include web links and further readings.

The obtained data were 250 posts consisting of 186 (74.40%) textual posts, 35 (14.00%) multimedia posts and 29 (11.60%) references. It is evident that most of posts were textual posts since these kinds of posts do not necessarily require the students to search the web first. For instance in posting comments, the students simply express their opinions or perspective on an issue, statement or information posted on the discussion platform. Though the dominant posts are textual posts, it is interesting to note that there are other kinds of posts like multimedia and references, which will make the discussion platform interesting to browse or view, and eventually encourage viewers to post their comments or ideas.

Table 1: Posts of Students and Teacher in the e-Classroom

Kinds of Posts	Students		Teacher	Total	%
	Male	Female			
Textual Posts	60	97	29	186	74.40
Multimedia Posts	14	12	9	35	14.00
References	9	19	1	29	11.60
Total	83	128	39	250	100.00
%	33.2	51.2	15.6	100.00	

Extent of participation in the Extension e-Classroom

In terms of textual posts, 18 students had low extent of participation in the asynchronous discussion; in terms of multimedia and references, 28 students had low extent of participation while one student was noted to have no participation at all. This student without participation was added as member of the group but dropped from the course. In terms of the overall extent of participation considering all the three types of posts, 13 students (44.83%) had low extent of participation, 8 (27.59%) had moderate level of participation, and 7 (24.14%) had high extent of participation. The students with high and moderated extent of participation were noted to have their own laptops or easy access to internet. In fact, one of the students with high extent of participation was a working student in an internet café, giving him therefore easy and free access to the

internet during his work time, not to mention that he generally spent his free time using the internet.

Table 2: No of students according to their Extent of Participation in the Discussion in the e- Classroom

Extent of Participation	Number of Students according to their Extent of Participation				
	Textual Posts	Multimedia Posts	References	Over-all	Over-all %
High	5	0	0	7	24.14
Moderate	5	0	0	8	27.59
Low	18	28	28	13	44.83
No participation	1	1	1	1	3.45
Total	29	29	29	29	100.00

Participation Extent: High-11& above posts; Moderate-6-10 posts; Low-1-5 posts and No participation -0.

Although there were almost half of the class who had low extent of participation, the class as a whole can be considered as active participants in the discussions in the e-classroom because almost half were noted to have either moderate or high extent of participation. Moreover, the archive of the discussion in the e-classroom reveals that every month from July to October, there were variety of posts. In other words, the interactions of the teacher and the students or among the students were maintained throughout the semester. This shows a favorable attitude of the students towards the use of Facebook closed group account as an extension of the regular face to face interaction.

It should be noted that those with minimal posts were noted to be less frequent users of the social network even before the start of the extension e-classroom because they either had no laptops of their own or no internet connection in their boarding house or residence

These finding affirm that the Net Generation students are more experiential, engaged and connected (Ramley& Zia, 2005 as cited by Shams, 2014), prefer to use technology for learning (Carlson, 2005 as cited by Shams, 2014). In other words, the extent of students' participation in the extension e-classroom though non-compulsory shows that the use of social network provides motivational platform for learning (Greenhow, Robelia & Hughes, 2009 as cited by Shams, 2014) which engages students in collaborative learning (Liaw, Chen & Huang, 2008 as cited by Shams, 2014).

Kinds of Interactions

The kinds of interactions considered in this study are the following: (1) Teacher – Student interaction such as teacher posting-student commenting, teacher asking- student answering, teacher posting-student liking, and teacher posting- student viewing; (2) Student –Student interaction such as student posting –student commenting, student asking – student answering, student posting-student liking, student posting- student viewing; and (3) Student – Teacher interaction such as student posting –teacher commenting, student posting – teacher answering, student posting – teacher liking, student posting – teacher viewing.

In determining the occurrence of interaction, each view, like, comment, answer to a post/ question is counted. Table 3 shows that for teacher initiated interaction, teacher

posting-student viewing had the highest frequency of 141 or 10.51% followed by teacher posting-student commenting with 55 (4.10%). For student-student interaction, student posting-student liking had the highest frequency of 917 (68.33%) followed by student posting-student viewing with 71 (5.29%). For student-teacher interaction, student posting-student liking had the highest frequency of 50 (3.73 %). For the student initiated interaction, results reveal that student asking-student answering and student answering-teacher answering both had zero frequency. Through the extension e-classroom as platform for interaction, the teacher-student relationship and social-emotional bond was developed to extend learning beyond the classroom (Nowell, 2014) even though the participation in the said e-classroom was non-compulsory.

The frequently recurring types of interaction imply that the interaction in the discussion platform was informal which is similar to the way they use the social network for personal purposes. Compared to the interaction inside the classroom, it was observed that students had less inhibition in starting a discussion episode by posting new information, multimedia or references in the discussion platform. The physical absence of the teacher may be considered as a reason for the reduced inhibition of the students in initiating discussion. The e-classroom therefore gave some of the shy but computer savvy students the opportunity to express their ideas or manifest their participation in the class activities. Similarly, Shams (2014) found that "medium-skilled" learners took part most actively in the Facebook activities. In fact, it was specifically noted that some of the most active participants in the e-classroom were generally quiet or shy inside the classroom, reciting only when called by the teacher similar to Liaw, Chen & Huang's (2008 as cited by Shams, 2014) findings that the use of social network as an educational tool liberates students from fear and introversion. Both the teacher initiated and student initiated posts evoked comments, or encouraged either liking or viewing of the posts, showing therefore that these posts were interesting and relevant to the course under study, and that the students prefer to use technology for learning (Carlson, 2005 as cited by Shams, 2014).

Table 3: Frequency of Types of Interaction in the Extension e-Classroom

Types of Interaction	Total	%
A. Teacher-Student Interaction		
Teacher posting-Student commenting	55	4.10
Teacher asking-Student answering	16	1.19
Teacher posting-Student liking	40	2.98
Teacher posting-Student viewing	141	10.51
Sub-total	**252**	**18.78**
B. Student –Student Interaction		
Student posting – Student commenting	47	3.50
Student asking – Student answering	0	0.00
Student posting- Student liking	917	68.33
Student posting- Student viewing	71	5.29
Sub-total	**1035**	**77.12**
C. Student – Teacher Interaction		
Student posting –Teacher commenting	5	0.37
Student asking – Teacher answering	0	0.00
Student posting – Teacher liking	50	3.73
Sub-total	**55**	**4.10**
Grand Total	**1342**	**100.00**

To show the dynamics of interactions, Box 1 shows sample discussion episodes illustrating a teacher initiated discussion. The sample discussion episode 1 shows that the teacher posted a statement that says "Media, peers and technology indeed influence the learners; but nothing comes close to a teacher's influence." This post was seen by 10 students and liked by 9 students, and had three comments from students. All the posts of the three students express agreement to the post of the teacher that a teacher's influence is indeed strong. The sample discussion episode 2 shows a question posted by the teacher together with the eight replies of the students. The question posted by the teacher is "What makes a good school?" The students' replies which mentioned good teaching, excellent faculty, students, administration and learning environment, reveal that the students recognize the different factors that make a good school.
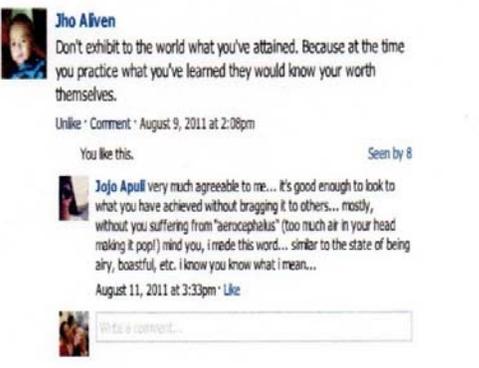
Such dynamics of interactions indicate that the students possess a holistic and comprehensive understanding of the different element of the education process which either makes a school good or not. Though the discussion episode is brief, it reveals that the discussion platform can serve as a means of emphasizing the generalization made in the face-to-face class interactions. In this way, the teacher is given the chance to reiterate the salient points in the discussion and the students are still reminded of the lesson. This interaction through the use of web tools like free social network in education classes like Social Dimensions of Education can be of help in developing technology-ready teachers (Vannatta & Beryer, 2000 as cited by Gensberg & Henman, 2009).

Box 1: Sample Discussion Episode Showing Interaction between the teacher and the students

Sample Discussion Episode 1   Sample Discussion Episode 2

Box 2 shows two sample discussion episodes initiated by students. Sample discussion episode 1 reveals a post made by a student and commented by the teacher. The student's posts deals on a meaning of teaching by mentioning that it is "to touch lives without force" and "for a better transformation" to which the teacher expressed her agreement. Sample discussion episode 2 reveals a quote posted by a student which says "Don't exhibit to the world what you've achieved. Because at the time you practice what you've learned, they would know your worth themselves. "A student posted his comment expressing agreement to the post by mentioning about not bragging or being boastful. The samples of interactions initiated by the students imply that the students know what or which topics are considered relevant or appropriate for the e-classroom, and that they took personal responsibility for sharing with their co-learners informational or insightful statements. Likewise, these discussion episodes imply that the students had the motivation to participate actively in the extension e-classroom although this was not made compulsory for the course. This suggests that when students perceive Facebook as serving their needs, there was evidence of a willingness to use Facebook in an academic context (Donlan, 2014).

Box 2: Sample Discussion Episode Showing Interaction Initiated by Students

Sample Discussion Episode 1   Sample Discussion Episode 2

Evidently, the interactions either initiated by the teacher or by the students reveal that the extension e-classroom in Education 6 – Social Dimensions of Education has become as a community of learners that addresses the three basic factors that affect the transaction which are the dialogue developed between teacher and learner, the structure that refers to the degree of structural flexibility of the program and the autonomy that alludes to the extent to which the learner exerts control over learning procedures (Moore, 1993 as cited by Giossos&Koutsouba, 2008). The dialogue in the extension e-classroom refers to the interactions between the teacher and the students, the students and the teacher, and the between and among the students in the contexts of the topics covered in Education 6 – Social Dimensions of Education. The structure of the extension e-classroom is rigid in terms of course coverage and protocol for participation but flexible in terms of choosing what kinds of materials may be posted. Autonomy which is defined by Moore as the extent to which the learner exerts control over learning procedures is shown by learners who participated in the discussions voluntarily at their convenient time.

With this classroom-level innovation in teaching strategy, the original intent of designing Facebook as a way for students of connecting with peers about classes at Harvard University in February 2004 (Caron & Brennaman, 2009), is sustained and continued. Through this e-classroom, the students together with the teacher were able to learn from the web-based environment around them and have become a community of learners collaborating to share, discuss, explore and create knowledge. Hence, the creation of the e-classroom is similar to Lave and Wenger's Communities of Practice (Oliver & Carr, 2009) which refers to a group of learners with the same interest who want to learn more about their interest.

Moreover, the interactions in the extension e-classroom contextualized Anderson et al's (2001) theoretical model for blended learning called Community of Inquiry which has three components, namely; cognitive presence, social presence and teaching presence. Cognitive presence which supports the development of critical thinking was discernible through the different posts of the students especially in their comments and responses to questions. Social presence which refers to the surrounding community and the culture was shown when the class felt comfortable to post varied materials or start an interaction showing that they feel safe to share their ideas and be open to new thoughts, and that the e-classroom was truly their classroom.

It was noted that the teacher presence was felt as the teacher viewed all the posts of the students, liked or gave comments to most of the posts, and gave reminders and announcements as the needs arose. This e-classroom brought individuals together into one community that surpasses physical space and time to unite and engage them in purposeful learning (Hodges, 2009). Loureiro & Bettencourt (2013) argue that in an extended classroom, the teacher must foster a sense of community and encourage the development of a social presence, and not replicate the traditional classroom. Indeed the use of Facebook closed group account has yielded significant experiences that support varied theory on the integration of technology to teaching and learning, and that support and encourage an instructional decision of using virtual learning spaces as an educational tool.

Computer Skills and Thinking Skills of the Learners as Revealed by their Posts: An Authentic Assessment
Amidst the advent of technology, the students are expected to possess functional literacy in the use of computer as a tool for learning. In fact, ICT skill is considered as one of the 21st century skills (NCTE, 2008; www.p21.org, 2009; Alberta Education, 2010) that should be focused by academic institutions. These computer skills are learned meaningfully if applied in context or if performed in activities that are interesting to the learners such as in the use of social networks or the use of internet.

With the participation in the e-classroom through a Facebook closed group account, the students were given the opportunity to apply their computer skills meaningfully in a computer activity that is interesting to them. The computer skills considered here pertain to web searching, posting in the virtual discussion platform, and making output (e-collage) using computer.

Based on the analysis of the archived discussions, there were four videos posted by the students which were taken from the youtube.com and website of a national news organization. The videos deal on issue that are highly significant and relevant to the topics in the course Social Dimensions of Education. For instance the video on "Effect of

Mass Media on Teens" is relevant to the topic Peer Group, Mass media and Technology while the video on "Real World English in Classroom" is helpful in fully understanding the topics Programs and Projects in Basic Education, and Globalization in Education. Meanwhile, the video on "Impact of ICT on Open and Distance Learning in a Developing Country Setting: The Philippine Experience" is a support material for the topic ICT and Education. The last video on "I-Witness: Layag" (GMA News Online <www.gmanetwork.com/news/video/94340/iwitness/i-witness-layag>, 2011) is useful to better understand the topic on Ecology of Learners, Family, School and Community.

The students who searched and posted videos have shown satisfactory computer skills as revealed by the videos as learning evidences. Similarly, the eight web links and 11 articles searched and posted by the students shown satisfactory computer skills in searching and posting the web links, and of articles. These students accomplished these computer tasks without any assistance of the teacher or any of their classmates. Independent performance of tasks means that these students possess the functional computer literacy, and therefore capable of independent learning via an online platform.

Box 3: The e-Collage Posted by the Students

In addition to web search and posting of various materials in the e-classroom, the students also showed and applied computer skills in the preparation of e-collage. The entire class worked in small group to create their own e-collage on Education for All, and posted it in the e-classroom together with a brief discussion. All the five items of e-collage in Box 3 show creativity and satisfactory computer skills in copying, resizing, cropping, adjusting, arranging and combining photos using either MS Word or MS PowerPoint, and then saving the e-collage as a picture using .jpeg format. These group outputs which were posted in the e-classroom and presented in the class as authentic learning evidences show that student possess functional computer skills. Moreover, this group task involved collaboration of learners similar to Wankel's (2009) finding that social media is used for collaborative projects in management education.

Table 4: Information-Gathering Skills Shown by the Learners Based on their Posts

Information-Gathering Skills	Sample Evidences of the Skill
Searching and posting videos	Effects of Mass Media on Teens (youtube.com)
	Real World English in Classroom – the Philippines (youtube.com)
	Impact of ICT on Open and Distance learning in a Developing Country Setting: The Philippine Experience
	I-Witness: Layag (GMA News Online)
Searching and posting links	The Influence of Media on Learning: the Debate Continues
	Peer Relations and Learning: Peer Relationships, Learning Motivation and Relationship Classroom
	Peer Relations and Learning
	Peer Group Influence (education.com)
	Student Learning (related to technology)
	Mass Media and Technology
	Technology is not our enemy …ourselves
	News: Students' Evolving Use of Technology – Inside Higher Education
Searching and posting articles	Education for all
	Interactive classroom (GMA News Article)
	Laptop (LT4T) Project of DepEd
	Influence of Technology in the Learning of learners
	ICT as a Tool in Education Where Are We?
	The Influence of ICT in the Philippines
	Multimedia and ESL Education
	DepEd Computerization Program (DCP) for Elementary Schools
	How much worth is a book for a Filipino student?
	What's Filipino youth?
	The Media as an Influence on Socialization
Making and posting e-collage	EFA Goals (1)
	Education for All, Class of 2015
	DepEd EFA 2015
	EFA Goals (2)
	Pillars of Education

Thinking is a complex process involved in learning. Participation in a discussion whether face-to-face or virtual implies the use different thinking skills categories. Marzano (1988) presents eight core thinking skills categories, four of which are considered in this study since they have been manifested by the students through their posts in the extension e-classroom. Table 5 shows thinking skills shown by the students based on their posts. Based on the analysis of the posts of students, it is evident that the thinking skill category information-gathering was demonstrated by the students during their participation in the e-classroom. The students searched the internet for articles/ information, pictures, videos and links related to the course Social Dimensions of Education. As shown in Table 1 (see above), there was a total of 250 posts which included materials taken from various internet sources. Since the students possess computer literacy, they could easily locate or search for relevant materials and post them in the discussion platform.

The second core thinking skill demonstrated by the students in the study was organizing. This was specifically manifested when the student made their own e-collage out different picture and graphics from the internet or from personal collection in order to make an e-poster or electronic picture essay focusing on Education for All. These five group outputs clearly reveal that the students went through the process of gathering information and graphics; selecting the relevant, if not most appropriate, graphics; and arranging the graphics to create a picture essay.

In addition to organizing, the students integrated what they have gained from the class discussion to their own readings, and organized their ideas, either their own or from sources, to make a brief paragraph to discuss or explain the picture essay. This thinking skill can be considered as a high order thinking skill since this requires recalling relevant prior knowledge, and using them to the complete or perform the current task. The discussions posted were brief but they captured the essential points about the topic (Education for All), thereby clearly manifesting that they were able to integrate relevant prior knowledge and current knowledge proficiently.

Evaluating is another core thinking skill that was discernible in the posts of the students. Specifically this was noted when students answered two questions that required analysis and evaluation of issues or ideas. For the first question, "What makes a good school?" the student posted a number of responses that reveal evaluation of the significance of the different elements or components of the educative process. For the second question "Is there such a thing as over-education?" the replies of the students show that they had to consider under-education, if there is such, versus over-education, before arriving at their answer. The students certainly weighed the issues related to either side before finalizing and stating their stance on the issue at hand.

Since this study simply aims to show whether the asynchronous discussions in the extension e-classroom reveal thinking skills, the posts are analyzed as evidence of the four thinking skills discussed above. However, there is no intent to specifically assess the different thinking skills of the students because this cannot be possible through the posts of students with varied number of posts or comments for the same information or question. Besides, the analysis of the students' posts to determine the thinking skills was done qualitatively without the use of a rubric, and was not done on a per student basis, hence generalization regarding the assessment of the thinking skills revealed in the discussions in the extension e-classroom should not be made. Rather, the posts of the students concerned can be considered as evidences that high order thinking skills can be

practiced and therefore enhanced even in a virtual discussion. In this regard, the experiences of the students as participants in the e-classroom, and the use of a social network as tool for instruction beyond the regular class sessions are considered worthy, meaningful and beneficial to both the students and the teacher.

Table 5: Thinking Skills Shown by the Students based on their Posts

Core Thinking Skills Categories (Marzano, 1988)	Evidence of the Skill
Information-gathering	Students gather articles, pictures, video and links related to the course under study
Organizing	Students organize what was discussed in the class about Education for All, what they have read from other sources, and the pictures, either personal or taken from the internet, in order to create an e-collage as a group output.
Integrating	Students through a group work explained the e-collage that was prepared.
Evaluating	Students answered the two questions posted by the teacher: "What makes a good school?" and "Is there such a thing as over-education?"

Proposed Policy on the Use of Web Tools for Instructional Purposes

Amidst the prevalence of social networks due to digital advancements and considering the absence of a university-wide policy, the proposed policy as an output of this study may prove to be a practical working paper in crafting a policy on the use of different web tools for instructional purposes, or may be considered by the college as a springboard for preparing a policy on the said concern at the college level. Moreover, this can be considered as a practical self-help guide for faculty who use varied internet tools in their classes

The proposed policy consists of: rationale, specific guidelines, child protection policy, and resolution of problems arising from the use of web-tools. The rationale provides a brief backgrounder on the exigency to institutionalize the use of web tools through a policy. The specific guidelines deal on various issues or concerns involving teacher, students, and officials of the college such as teacher's freedom to select a social platform, security measures in using a social platform, participation in social platform for grading purposes, among others. The provisions on child protection policy is a mechanism of ensuring that the free social platforms are not used directly or indirectly in any form of abuse or disregard for the rights of the students as children. In particular, the provisions on the resolutions of problems arising from the use of web-tools are included to provide all the persons involved guidance in seeking assistance should there be any constraints or problems, or of redressing their grievances, if any.

Table 6: Issues and Concerns and Persons Involved Covered in the Proposed Policy on the Use of Web-tools for Instructional Purposes

Issues/ Concerns	Persons Involved
Teachers' freedom to select and use a social platform or internet tool	Teachers
Inclusion of the use of a social platform or internet tool in the syllabus	teachers, department head, dean
Use of a social platform or internet tool in teaching the course only as an additional, non-compulsory activity or	Teachers

requirement to the students	
Adopting security measures in using the social platform since it belongs to the social domain.	Teachers
Observation of transparency and decency when using the social platform	teachers, department head, dean
Use of social platform as an alternative means of submitting requirements	Teachers
Confidentiality of the proceedings of the discussions/posts	teachers, students
Participation in the social platform necessary for the grading purposes	teachers, students
Students' voluntary participation in the social platform	teachers, students
Cost of using the social platform as an educational tool	teachers, students
Learners' orientation on how to participate in the discussion in the social platform.	teachers, students
Submission of a report on the use of social platform	teachers, department head, dean
Ceasing of the use social platforms as an educational tool	teachers, department head, dean

With this proposed policy, even at a classroom level, the fair use of technology in teaching and learning is ensured, thus avoiding, if not minimizing the unbridled use of technology like web tools. Not to mention, a policy on the use of web tools will help school officials and teachers in changing students mind – and skills – sets to appropriate collaborative learning benefits of Facebook in formal educational contexts (Donlan, 2014). And since designing and implementing an extended classroom through the use of online tools and virtual worlds requires preparation, time and resources (Loureiro & Bettencourt, 2013), then an institutionalized policy is necessary. But more importantly, with a college or university policy on the use of web tools for instructional purposes, research based recommendations of protecting online learners, adopting standards for instruction in technology or integrated with technology (NCTE, 2007) should be cautiously addressed.

5. Conclusion

Amidst the prevalent of use of Facebook among students, the teacher may introduce innovation in the delivery of coursework by appropriately using the Facebook closed group account as a supplement to traditional teacher-directed instruction in Professional Education course in the Teacher Education program. As a practical means for ubiquitous learning, the Facebook closed group account used as extensions e-classroom serves as an interactive extension e-classroom which benefits both the teacher and the students, and therefore may be used in other courses. The virtual discussion platform generally provides students opportunity to share information and give comments and reactions, and the teacher opportunity to provide additional instructional materials which evoked reflective learning. The posts of the students serve as authentic evidences of both their computer skills and high order thinking skills.

Though the study has limitations due to limited number of learners involved and limited duration covering one semester only, the findings bear relevance to faculty who intend to use or are using social networks and other web tools for instructional purposes. Consequently, the university should then ensure that institutional policy on use of web tools like social network for instructional purposes and corresponding ethical considerations are in place in order to maximize the benefits of this evolving modality for teaching and learning.

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