

THE USE OF SOCIAL TRANSLUCENCE IN A DISTANCE EDUCATION SUPPORT ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a Web-based environment (Web-course) designed for large groups distance learning programs in which students may benefit from the availability of large user and information bases, without losing the advantages of working in small groups. The system implements concepts of Social Translucence developed by Erickson and Kellog [2]. Controlled visibility, mobility and management of student-produced information were built into the course organization and communication tools giving the student more alternatives and control over the process. Although the tools used in Web-course are all available elsewhere, their combination in one single environment could give the learner more flexibility and the instructor higher effectiveness in assisting the student and managing the course.

The results show that collaboration and participation are positively related with visibility, mobility and performance, indicating that the addition of translucence and mobility resources to learning environment can improve the effectiveness of the process. Participant surveys also indicate satisfaction with the tools and results.