ABSTRACT

This paper introduces a new method of communication between the school and the family, using an Electronic Booklet developed in the course of the authors’ investigation project with the purpose of rendering the communication between both parties more effective. Today there is a general agreement, within educational sciences, as to the fundamental role occupied by the collaboration between the school and the family in the learning process and in educational success. With this Electronic Booklet, the communication becomes synchronous in a web environment. By logging in, educational actors can access a wide range of information: absences, behaviour, teacher advices, final grades, evaluation tools in each subject and corresponding evaluation, personal data, etc., eliminating the obstacles that hinder a successful collaboration between the school and the family.

Keywords: Communication, Electronic Booklet, Investigation, School-Family Collaboration, Web Applications

INTRODUCTION

The electronic evolution we experience in the present times has led to significant changes, not only on a global level but also locally, and even individually.

Indeed, technological revolution induced several changes in different levels of our society, including the cultural level, education (Abrantes 2009) and communication methods, guiding a new way of seeing inside this information society (Rocha 2012, Sá and Rocha 2012), where the communication overcomes time and space barriers, creating a virtual world and influencing the way we think and the way we act.

A world that is changing, development of a knowledge-based society, suggesting the possible value of a new approach in the education field. This is why the school needs to make full use of
new technological resources, creating not only the necessary conditions for the development of an education turned to and making use of technologies, but also new communication methods between the school and the family (GEPE 2010).

This is the perspective we assume when we talk about the Electronic Booklet (EB), developed in the course of our investigation project, as one possible answer to this technological evolution and to the potential enhancement of the collaboration process between the school and the family, in order to the possible improvement of the teaching and learning process and educational success.

In the following sections we will address the communication process established between the family and the school, explain the methodology behind this research, justify the need for an Electronic Booklet, and present the prototype of the Electronic Booklet, the prototype impact evaluation, our conclusions and prospective research projects.

COMMUNICATION PROCESS BETWEEN THE FAMILY AND THE SCHOOL

In the present times, schools resort to new Information Technologies (IT) without exploring their full potential. Schools only stand to gain from using IT, not only pedagogically and in terms of school management but also from the communication established between the school and the family of the student.

The truth is there is still a significant gap between understanding the need to use and effectively implementing information technologies with the purpose of promoting the communication between the school and the family. The contact between the school and the family should not be reduced to an occasional and casual relationship with limited impact in the educational process, but that has been the rule in many schools (Batista 2005, Lourenço 2008). Finding new communication methods is extremely important (McLean 2006).

Presently, teachers and class directors use the booklet to communicate in certain situations. The underlying principle of the student booklet is the improvement of the collaboration process between the school, the student and his family. According to this inclusive perspective and enabling school autonomy, the booklet is a tool that promotes:

1. Access to information concerning the teachers, the Class Director and the Class Representative, academic calendar and school activities, as well as the services offered by the school to the student and the Guardian;
2. Access to useful information concerning the student, giving way to more concrete and assertive actions from the Class Director and the school in serious situations, such as in case of illness or severe lack of discipline episodes;
3. An improved knowledge of the school concerning the student, namely in terms of extracurricular activities;
4. The communication between the teachers and the Class Director in several situations, including:
   a. Alerting teachers for situations involving the health of the student;
   b. Answering requests made by class teachers;
   c. Being informed of the activities promoted by or developed in school;
   d. Being aware of praiseworthy attitudes or, on the contrary, unfavourable attitudes on the part of the student;
5. Notification and justification of student absences.
Future Directions of Course Management Systems
www.igi-global.com/chapter/future-directions-course-management-systems/27656?camid=4v1a

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