INTRODUCTION

Time is probably one of the most polysemous words in education. In e-learning, characterization of the time factor is particularly relevant because of the high level of flexibility in the teaching and learning times, and the resulting responsibility of the e-learners in regulating their learning times. This volume intends to make progress in the characterization of the time factor in e-learning by analyzing its impact on the assessment processes. This leads us to consider two kinds of times. The first type is the evaluation of students' time during the process of their learning activities. The work of Carreras and Valax introduces the concept of time patterns as regular structures of time and a methodology for the study of time flexibility in the context of distance work and learning, discussing its implications in both professional and academic contexts. Also, in the context of analysis of the time patterns, Demeure and Romero analyze a long-term Computer Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL) activity in order to identify the different levels of time patterns of the students participating in a collaborative writing task performed on a wiki page. Alvarez, Lopez & Hernandez study the learners' interactions in a forum considering time as the basis of the interaction pattern analysis.

The second type of time we consider is the time factor impact in revising and improving collaborative written products. In this perspective, the main objective of analysis is to characterize the impact of the delay and pace of the feedback in the collaborative learning process. In this perspective, Espasa analyzes the relationship between the time dimension and the assessment dimension, highlighting the impact of feedback according to the moment when the feedback is introduced in the collaborative learning process. Guasch, Espasa & Alvarez close this volume with an analysis of the impact of feedback in a collaborative writing activity in which they evaluate the writing process improvements when students receive regular feedback inviting them to interact in revising the written product.

Througout this volume the time factor appears to be a key dimension in the assessment of long term interactions through the use of time patterns and time flexibility measurements, but also an essential factor in the understanding of the impact of assessment and feedback times in the collaborative learning process.

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