

Feedback Platform for Community Colleges: An Approach to Knowledge Excellence

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Abstract. This proposal describes a feedback system based on a virtual platform between the cloister, which connects theoretical and practical imbalances taught for adapting them to new needs. This allows an increase in efficiency in the quality of teaching and that students get involved in improving their own training, by making the dynamism and interaction two fundamental pillars.

This feedback can improve the quality of academic material and facilitate students' adaptation to their practical preparation and their incorporation into the workplace. This fact is complemented with the use of the feedback system by the technical department of the companies associated with training centers, which communicate to them their needs and improvement suggestions based on the needs that they experience.

Keywords: community college, education, feedback, e-learning, adaptability.

1 Introduction

In the era of rapid changes in the workplace, the development is a key factor that cannot be stopped, and it is necessary to allow the growth and expansion of our knowledge. Our society inconstantly changing, so what facilitated our access to the work market yesterday, maybe it will be obsolete tomorrow [1] [2].

The change in the workplace, which exerts its influence on students' training, and future professionals to be inserted in the labor market, based on three fundamental reasons, which are: technology, increasing competition, and globalization. The rapid and constant progress of technology, which surprises us daily with new developments, helps us in our spare time or in the workplace [3]. It is not enough to use the programs we learnt in schools where we began our learning period, but the latest news and developments compel us to hone our skills and expand our knowledge. The second reason is the growing competition between firms in the workplace. We live in a time of crisis, where each company has to fight for survival from the plurality of supply and demand, which requires us to use new technologies, inventions and knowledge to continue in the workplace [3].

The last reason and perhaps the most important is globalization. The contact with different cultures occurs regularly and we must know how to handle these experiences [4]. It is very important to follow the progress and development to be able to move up at the profession and gain professional knowledge. Community Colleges, gives us the opportunity to achieve our own goals and to continue the development work, which happens very fast in our time. To be in constant evolution and to grow, allows us to be part of this progressive world.

2 State of Art

Students and instructors need new and flexible tools [5] that can help students engage with relevant learning and depth so they can obtain better results in life and professional senses.

Today, due to the teacher's work, the role of technology has been appreciated as a mean of transforming education. Using it in the right way, technology can expand the impact of good teachers, motivate students and connect faster than ever to the world of information and provide them the support they require, thus creating a powerful learning environment. The importance of using technology in community college nowadays depends on the academic education type [6], which is taught in different ways:

- **Classroom:** Teaching takes place in facilities intended for it. The physical presence of the student is required for this purpose.
- **Virtual:** In this case, the use of online teaching platforms [7], reaches its maximum development. The teaching process relies exclusively on the use of technology as a mean of learning, supporting and developing the contents offered to the student.
- **Hybrid:** As its name suggests, it is the mix result of the above two methods, as a flexible mean of learning within the classroom facilities or home / work student.

The teaching process includes theoretical lectures, simulations [8], laboratory practices, use of management programs or theories which represent the academic contents offered to the student. Gradually, during training, or near the end of the degree, business practices take place for the achievement of academic degree. Subsequently, the employment would occur with more or less success by the student, and in the professional labor market, being able to do their work.

During these two possible contacts with the company, the student suffers an adaptive process as a result of the application of their theoretical knowledge, that lacks accuracy when we consider the specific activities to be performed at the enterprise level [9][10] or the use of market management applications or implementing activities in handling instrumentation. All of them are determined by supply and demand offers that govern the labor market needs.

3 Teaching Quality VS Successful Job Placement

Regardless the type of community colleges, we are going to focus on the teaching quality, and a supplement to help improve the educational process through using virtual platforms. Despite the use of technology in virtual or hybrid classroom teaching, there are difficulties in the employment of graduated students as a result of the mismatch between the learning content and its practical application, starting from the practices in different companies, they perform as part of their training [11].

This imbalance not only exists in community colleges, but also at any training center, particularly by the very practical and flexible sense of community colleges, we propose to implement it, because of its proximity to the professional environment which students have to adapt with. A successful education, connected to the labor market, reduces academic failure caused by the theoretical complexity and distance of teaching contents to the reality that surrounds the pupil. A successful education more adapted to the student's immediate future, allows a satisfactory employment and greater understanding and assimilation of the information he will apply in the market.

Therefore, the quality of education provided in the Community Colleges, affects the medium-long term academic success and the student's profession [12]. But how can we combine higher quality teaching with the practice that students should do?

4 Feedback Virtual Platform (FVP)

For these differences are minimal and adaptation in practice or as a professional, be the less aggressive and the most pleasant possible, we propose a virtual platform that facilitates communication between the training centers, students and companies in which the student perform his practices or work as newly professional.

Once the student takes his first contact with the labor market, he can perceive the difficulties experienced due to theoretical gaps, lack of accuracy in laboratory practices concerning management programs or instrument manipulation, which is not adjusted to the existing market. [9] Similarly, the company's supervisors may appreciate such difficulties from their experience so they could transmit their suggestions to the teachers in the Community College, for a greater efficiency, by preventing students or professionals from repeating the concepts that need revision.

The platform is constituted by three communication channels we describe below.

4.1 Company – Community College

For this purpose the virtual platform fully provides the teaching materials used in the student training:

- Theoretical material.
- Audiovisual material.
- Computing resources.
- Teaching methodology.

These files represent the academic contribution of the community college for students and can be exclusively accessed by the company that they gave it the permission for such purpose. Each section above can be viewed and reviewed by the company's supervisors after detecting the deficiencies in the implementation by a specific professional or apprentice in practices. This platform provides a registration area where the company once has logged and in contact with the teaching load, can interact with it through:

- **Suggestions' and comments' form:** it's attached right after the visualization of each training material and methodology. The companies can notice specific improvements to the information exposed in the platform.
- **Forms uploading files:** companies can share with Community Colleges, attachments or documents that complement the teaching information, or reflect a more accurate view of the proposed changes.

The contribution of the company is publicly available to all Community Colleges associated with the platform, so that the experience of improvement towards a center can be shared and used by others.

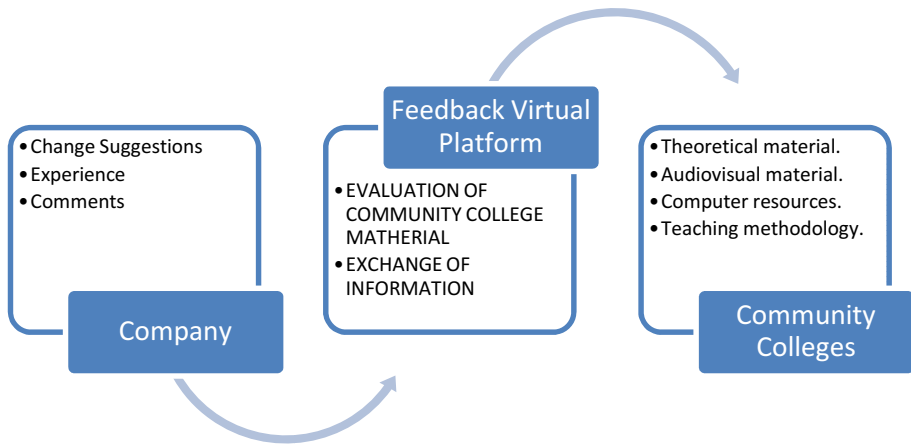


Fig. 1. Company – Community College Environment

4.2 Student/Professional – Company

In this section the intern or recent graduate who joins the business world may notify the supervisors, aspects they see appropriate to be communicated by the company to the Community College, so that, once received, these aspects can be incorporated into the teaching content in short term for their benefit, or the benefit of future students. That would result in a better use of their adapting time in companies. For this purpose, once the students logged in the platform, they can interact with it through:

- **Suggestions and comments form:** it's attached right after the visualization of each training material and methodology. The students, like previously in the case of the companies, can notice specific improvements regarding the information exposed in the platform.

- **Forms uploading files:** it would allow students to upload academic material or documentation for a better exhibition of their view, so that it may be assessed by the company and the Community College.

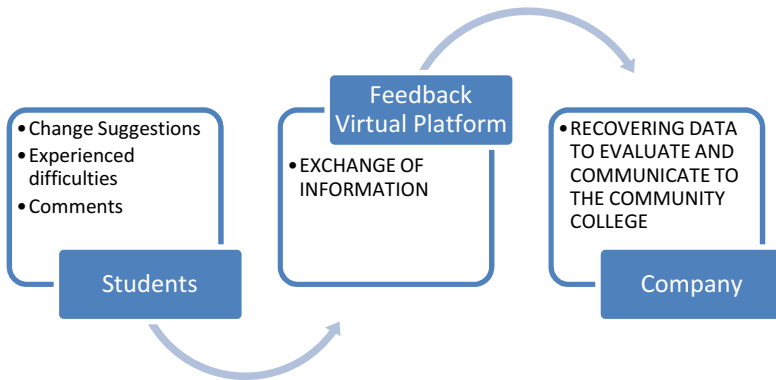


Fig. 2. Student – Company Environment

4.3 College Communities –Feedback Virtual Platform

The Community Colleges may register on the Virtual Platform feedback, as members of the academic community, as a meet place where they can share experiences and improvements in the quality of teaching. Therefore, they may consider the experiences of other educational centers that will benefit and publish their own, providing an adequate environment for the meeting of ideas and experiences in order to achieve together a positive development of theoretical practice, inside and outside schools formation.

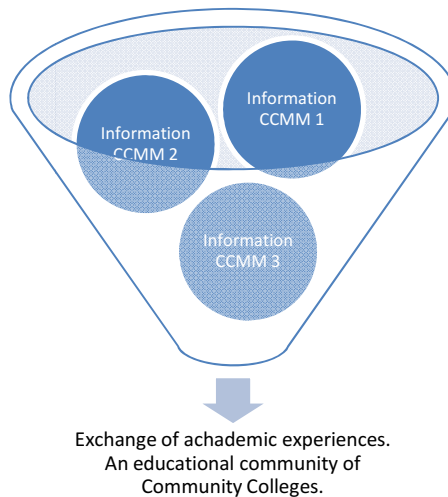


Fig. 3. Community Colleges – Feedback Virtual Platform

Beside the platform we are proposing in this paper, researches prove the practical use of the social networks as a tool to create a participation e-learning environment between the students and the teachers, such as Facebook with the help of plugins specifically designed for educative purposes, as it has been presented in last studies [13]

5 How does Feedback Virtual Platform (FVP) Work?

The virtual platform feedback is an educational web platform, which is like another already existing academic platforms, provides an intuitive and basic functionality, summarized in the following points:

5.1 The Front Page

- The front-page of the platform – the web page accessed by your web browser - usually includes information about the site and can be highly customized.
- The users (Community Colleges, students or companies) proceed to log into the platform, through the accounts provided previously or the individual registering on the platform or after authentication from other system.

5.2 Inside the Feedback Virtual Platform (FVP)

- The basic structure of the FVP platform is organized round the different Community College courses in which they are associated by the student or the company. These are basically web pages or areas, where teachers can submit their resources and activities for students. They may have different rules, but usually include a number of central sections where the materials are shown and where side modules offer information or additional characteristics. Attached to the sections mentioned above, we can find the comment-suggestions web forms and the file upload section, the students and companies may use to transmit their contributions.
- Courses may contain a yearly academic content, according to specialty and the Community College. They may be used by a teacher or group of teachers.
- The way students or companies enroll in courses depends on the establishment, for example, through self-inscription, manual registering by the Community College or automatically by an administrator.
- The courses are organized into categories according to the area they belong to.
- The forum which forms the virtual community where Community Colleges share or exchange ideas and experiences, provides an alert notification area, that is activated right after the remittance of information between a company and a learning center. This can be publicly viewed if the contacted learning center allows it, so that other centers (Community Colleges) can take advantages of the suggestions and contributions made by a particular company.

5.3 Teachers, Students and Companies

- Access to the FVP platform can be performed in the role of "teacher" or "student" or "company"
- Whoever logs into platform disposes a special privilege according to the needs previously defined by the administrator.

5.4 Finding the Way

- A logged user can access FVP platform areas such as Community College courses associated to a certain profile through navigation and administration sides. The content of these sides depends on the user role and the privilege granted by the administrator.
- Each user has its own customizable page, which can be acceded through the Home menu navigation.

6 Conclusions

We note that the discrepancies between the information provided in the Community Colleges and the experience received in the labor market are significantly reduced, making the academic experience a satisfactory approach towards the future work performance, as we improve the quality of education.

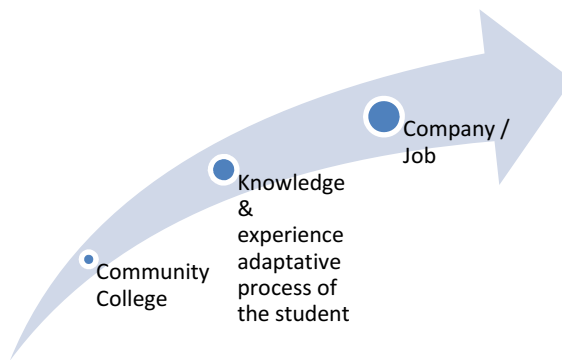


Fig. 4. Student – Professional gradual process

Thus, after adding a more practical teaching component, the Community Colleges become closer to real life experience through gradual approaches thanks to the feedback provided by the platform, in a way that can be warranted at the same time, that the transition to the professional life market by the students is satisfactory and not traumatic due to the labor-academic mismatches.

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