Communication aspects of online courses

from CARNet Pilot Project

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Discussion

Communication is the most important key for success of an online course!

- › Students' adaptation to e-learning

- › Students' communication

- › Time management

Students' adaptation to e-learning

COURSE	APPLIED	DID NOT TAKE THE INTRODUCTORY TEST	DROPPED OUT
Internet	19	7	**36.84 %**
Flash	22	4	**18.18 %**

> **Paradigm shift (Kuhn)**

- Factoid level (standard course tools)
- Emotional level (independent research, group communication, communication with tutor)

> **Conclusion:**

- Stronger accent on paradigm shift
- Increasing tutoring activities
- More attention to emotional level

Students' communication

- Student - LMS

- Tutor – LMS

- Student - tutor

- Student – student

Student – LMS communication

Technical issues

› Slow opening of seminar pages

› Problems with breaking of voice due to a slow connection

› Inability to reach chat

Content issues

› Slow passing through theory

› Student's inability to skip boring/slow parts of the lesson

Conclusion:

› Tutoring activities at the beginning of the course should be more intensive

› Graphic and visual elements should be designed according to target population of users

› Technical assistance should be offered through tutors

Tutor – LMS communication

> Correct technical and visual elements

Conclusion:

> Administrative tools satisfy tutors' needs

Student – tutor communication

› The students' idea of a tutor is generally very positive, mostly conected with two notions:
  ‣ Help
  ‣ Expert
› Students have not fully recognised tutor's role!
› Asked to describe a perfect tutor, students strongly separated into two groups:
  ‣ Inactive tutor
  ‣ More active tutor
› Tutor's role strongly depends on course concept!

Conclusion:

› Course concept should be more oriented towards communication with the tutor

Student – student communication

- › Given only to the groups with active tutor, in a form of
  - ‣ Forum
  - ‣ Chat
- › Both communication channels have been used rarely, especially chat
- › Easily explained with the course concept

Conclusion:

- › The course concept should be more oriented towards communication and discussion

Time management

- › Two durations:
  - ‣ Duration of the whole course – 20 days
  - ‣ Average duration of a session – no data
- › Still, average student has been working approximately 1 hour/week
- › Communicologicaly inefficient for two reasons:
  - ‣ A student must feel comfortable and safe in learning environment
  - ‣ Motivation "I can do it tomorrow"
- › On the other hand, offered concept gives more students a possibility to finish the course at all

Conclusion:

- › The course duration should be designed
  - ‣ Long enough that each student has a possibility to finish the course without stress, but short enough to motivate
  - ‣ Long enough to give as much knowledge as possible without tiredness and boredom

Conclusion

> The main question:

Whom would you like to speak to?

> Online courses for students should:
>   ▸ Be more oriented towards communication in all directions
>   ▸ Be more vivid, dynamic and intensive
>   ▸ Be more oriented to understanding than to reproduction
>   ▸ Give tutors more possibilities of following students' activities

> Students should learn much more about e-learning in general, and about the paradigm shift from classic to online studying
> Technical assistance should be offered through tutors

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