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TITLE OF A PAPER:

Strategies for creating a new environment for learning a foreign language of mass media

ABSTRACT

There are three main reasons for planning to introduce a web based learning language course in the curriculum of mass media studies at the Department of communication sciences at the University of Dubrovnik: first, the exchange and interpretation of information and the development of knowledge, together with the ability to read, write, and communicate effectively over computer networks will be essential for success in almost every sphere of life; thus preparing students to function in the networked society will become a major role of language instruction; second, the study course of mass media is introducing the model of learning in a practice community, collaborating with publishers, media and business world connected to different forms of professional and public communication; consequently the use of information technologies, multimedia in courses of foreign language within this group of studies is expected; third, web based learning give the opportunity for using authentic learning materials which is indispensable in an integrated approach to foreign language learning especially in the language learning for special purposes, in this case the language of mass media.

The paper will try to expose the strategies used in creating the hybrid/blended model of language learning for the course of «Italian of mass media» at the University of Dubrovnik, which is planed to be introduced in the 2006 at the third year of studies.

Defining the new learning environment with the new models of communication and culture of teaching and learning process, the new theories and techniques regarding the use of information technologies in the field of language didactics will be introduced, connecting them to the theories, approaches and methods of learning and teaching describing the various phases of the use of information technologies. Some reflexions will be done upon the change of didactics in the virtual class explaining the concept of community intended as a group of people learning and doing practice using technologies.

Strategies for creating the content, communication and assesment tools for the blended type course of «Italian of mass media», together with expected benefits of such a model of learning will be exposed. Strategies include the pre-course questionnaire to be made with students regarding their readiness to use the information technoligies in their learning process and the post-course qualitative and quantitative analisys of learners outcomes to compare a new teaching and learning model, which is to be introduced, with the existing more traditional models of language didactics at the University of Dubrovnik.

Finally one personal experience from the online Master of italian language didactics from the University of Venice, in which a community of language teachers became students in a virtual learning and practice community, will be presented.