

# **Educational practices at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb – further steps towards student- centred learning**

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# EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

- Instructor-led models
  - ☐ passive knowledge reception
  - ☐ teacher as the «gatekeeper» of information
  - ☐ individual effort
- student-centred models
  - ☐ problem solving
  - ☐ teamwork
  - ☐ interacting and processing information
  - ☐ active involvement learning
  - ☐ construction and discovery
  - ☐ problem exploration
  - ☐ customized learning

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- Contemporary students view knowledge and derive meaning in a style that is vastly different from the teaching traditionally used in higher education.
  - the traditional lecture system covered material through teaching by telling
  - This approach does not fit the preferred learning style of most of today's students

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- Today's students entertain, think, learn and grow up in a synthesis of sensory stimuli
  - The Internet has changed nearly every aspect of how they live, how they work and how they learn.
  - Leaving teachers the role of facilitators and moderators



# E-learning

- After the initial hype and enthusiasm has calmed down, and oversimplifications regarding the relation between e-learning and traditional learning have earned more and more critics
- New hybrid approach complementing the best features of the traditional and technological paradigm have emerged in higher education
- **BLENDED LEARNING**



# BLENDED LEARNING

- hybrid of classroom and online learning that includes some of the conveniences of online courses without the complete loss of face-to-face contact



# Computer-Mediated Communication

- discussion board
- e-mail
- PROS
  - powerful tool for group communication and cooperative learning
  - promotes a level of reflective interaction
- CONS
  - reduced non-verbal social cues can generate misunderstandings that adversely affect learning





# BLENDING AND STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING

- provide the independence and increased control essential to developing critical thinking
- support free and open dialogue, critical debate, negotiation and agreement
- focus is on active learning
- provide a caring and supportive learning environment



# BLENDED AND STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING

- focus on knowledge construction through authentic learning
- provide learning environments that allows anyone to learn by doing and by receiving feedback
- integrate self-paced learning programs and/or cooperative group situations, ultimately holding the student responsible for his own advances in education
- support complimentary activities and are interactive in nature



# Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Zagreb

- 23 Departments
- 33 undergraduate programmes
- 6100 students
- majority studies at two departments i.e. has two majors
- a constant problem of time and space for lectures and tutorials

# Blended learning at the Department of information studies in Zagreb

- during the summer semester of academic year 2000./2001. a pilot e-learning course on school libraries started
  - Course was based on:
    - synchronous and asynchronous communication
    - web-based learning
    - students team work
    - research
    - projects
  - Almost completely distant



# Project

- Organization of Information and Knowledge in the Electronic Learning Environment
- Started in september 2002
- Three year project
- <http://infoz.ffzg.hr/oizeoo>
- One of project tasks was to investigate, test and evaluate open source and commercial solutions and decide upon the best solution

# Project results

- The decision felt on the free, open-source course management system (CMS) MOODLE
- Which was:
  - ☐ Translated
  - ☐ Customized
  - ☐ Implemented
- In academic year 2004/2005. under the name OMEGA
- <http://omega.ffzg.hr>



# MOODLE

- free
- easy-to-use
- simple and understandable interface
- large variety of modules
  - SCORM compliance
  - authentication via LDAP or IMAP



# OMEGA

- became a faculty-wide e-learning system
  - 18 Departments
  - 95 courses
    - 79 visible courses
    - 16 invisible courses
  - 140 professors and assistants
  - more than 4 GB of produced learning and teaching materials
  - 1500 students





# SURVEY

- Conducted among 120 participants enrolled in two compulsory and one elective course at the beginning and at the end of the courses



# EVALUATION

- Was based on four major factors
  - Content
  - Presentation and interactivity
  - Support and evaluation
  - User satisfaction



# RESULTS

- at the beginning of the courses majority of students wasn't very enthusiastic about the course content or simply did not know what to expect
- the results at the end of the course have shown that their attention has been roused up to the point where they are very interested about the subject



# CONTENT

- evaluated as difficult but understandable, especially through:
  - Exercises
  - team work
  - connection with the real-life examples



# INTERACTIVITY

- Assignments and short quizzes were evaluated positively
- some of the students commenting that they would encourage the increase of such activities



# SUPPORT

- Students emphasized the importance and need of having asynchronous communication via OMEGA as well as the human contact



# USER SATISFACTION

- students were satisfied with this new teaching and learning style because:
  - they could prepare themselves for the course assignment in time that best suited them
  - expressed themselves positively about the grading