

TEACHER PREPARATION FOR INTEGRATING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES INTO PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT VIA USE OF MOODLE

(Preliminary communication)

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Abstract

The current report presents on-line course in information technologies from the educational plan of “Physical education and sport” specialty. The emphasis is on the technology of work as well as the content of the course. The educational process is performed within a software platform MOODLE, which represents specific environment for e-learning. The education is performed in the form of blended learning - on-line learning and in-school classes. Hereby is given a questionnaire, which gives information about the opinions of students who participated in the educational process. The survey has been conducted with 28 students- 15 men and 13 women. The teachers’ willingness is to develop themselves and develop the electronic forms of education in all subjects from the bachelors’ and masters’ degrees programs.

Keywords: *e-learning, students, online platforms, curriculum, Educational survey.*

INTRODUCTION

In the Strategy of Sofia University the term “e-learning” is used in two of its meanings: as “blended learning” – building up, mixing and integrating various information and communication technologies (ICT) in the traditional educational context. The technologies can be used to assist both teaching and learning as well as the pedagogic communication and as “*form of distance e-learning*” or “*distance e-learning*” (in cases of dominant on-line elements of the education) (Taken from The Strategy for Development of Electronic and Distance learning in Sofia University).

In the Strategy is planned within the next 5 years the University to have a well-developed and probed approach to create, assist, maintain and recognize modules and programs, which contain significant share of on-line based and maintained educational activities and content, including such which are entirely distance.

That approach is planned in the activity of all faculties and is directed towards creating and improving new forms and methods of education.

Good experience and achievements

In the recent years teachers in different specialties have been developing and testing, in real educational process, courses aimed for on-line or distance form of education for bachelors’ and masters’ degrees in the Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. For three years

the portal site www.elearn.uni-sofia.bg, in which all courses have been published and functioning.

The current work on research over e-learning is directed to the following:

- analyzing and systemizing the information sources on the problems of distance learning;
- researching and critically analyzing the experience in some Western European, Balkan and Bulgarian universities about the distance form of learning in master’s and bachelor’s degrees.
- adapting the learning process to the distance learning conditions, including the approaches, methods, means, educational organization and content;
- testing experimental courses for distance learning (blended learning);
- developing a system of indicators for following the dynamics of the education quality via the use of distance form of education;
- using ICT in the learning process;
- implementing methods of active learning;
- balance between theoretical and practical work;
- dynamic renovation of the content;
- clear criteria for students’ works assessment;
- getting feedback about the quality of the materials used, communication etc.
- creating structures of teacher training on the development of e-courses for distance learning

Brief description of the e-learning platform

MOODLE

Moodle, abbreviation of Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment, is free software, e-learning platform, known also as platform used for managing education or Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Since June 2013 there have been 83 008 websites registered and checked on it, servicing total of 70696570 users in 7.5 + million courses with 1.2 + million teachers.

Initially Moodle was developed by Martin Dougiamas to assist teachers to create on-line courses with an emphasis on the interaction and mutual development of the content and it has been developing since. The first version of Moodle dates from 20th August 2002.

Moodle has several functions considered typical for an on-line platform as well as some original innovations.

Some typical characteristics of Moodle are:

- Assignment submission;
- Discussion forum;
- Files download;
- Grading;
- Moodle instant messages;
- Online calendar;
- Online news and announcement (College and course level);
- Online quiz;
- Wiki (taken from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moodle>).

Description of the aims and the purpose of the information technologies course for specialty “Physical education and sport”

The course aims that the students acquire knowledge, skills and practical experience. The students who have successfully finished the course will know how to use actively and integrate the information and communication technologies into the Physical education and sport. The course on information and communication technologies includes a system of knowledge, skills and competencies, which the students have to acquire in the period of their pedagogical preparation. Numerous topics and problems from the education content are offered as well as the main terminology, the problem of ICT integration, etc. Emphasis is put on some contemporary trends in the use of ICT in the education.

In the training are included various activities for work with ICT, demonstration of the educational process, the specifics of the learning organization.

ORGANIZATION

The students register themselves on the web page with their full names, specialty, faculty number, e-mail. They are obliged to look into the lectures and additional information prepared for the current week and to complete the tasks within a deadline. The active participation in the course requires participation in the forums, sharing experience and opinions, keeping constant contact with the other students and the teacher.

Real and active interaction is secured in both teacher's and student's work. It is integrated in the teaching-learning process in general. The interaction between the different participants in the educational process is performed actively, on the base of modern computer technology. The active position, in which the students are put, makes them more involved and curious when working with the electronic educational materials. That type of learning also leads to greater satisfaction of the participants.

Expected results

At the end of this course the students will be able to:

- use various, useful information during the educational process of Physical education and sport when using ICT;
- get acquainted with the main components of the computer system and their functional specifics;
- know and apply the normative documents connected to safety when using computer systems in their classes;
- know how to operate freely in computer reality with graphical user interface;
- work freely with file system (create, search, save, copy and move files);
- get acquainted and work with the main applications, which will be used during the educational process;
- develop skills for individual research and experimentation with different software products in the process of physical education and sport education in the Bulgarian schools.

Thematic plan

Leading topics

1. Main terminology in the information technologies.
2. Information skills. Information literacy.
3. Essence, history and main functions of the Internet.
4. Presentation skills. Essence and pedagogical possibilities of multimedia.
5. Integration of ICT into physical education and sport.
6. Electronic resources.

Additional topics

1. Work with informational sources.
2. Children's safety in the Internet.
3. Digital images of the education aims. Design and usage.
4. Electronic resources, encyclopedias, dictionaries.
5. Social, ethical and juridical aspects of the ICT use.

Activities for individual work

For the individual practical work of the students the following activities are considered:

1. Creation of electronic dictionary containing main terminology in the information technology. Researching of sources, topic discussion in a forum.
2. Individual research of “Information literacy”. Discussion and publishing the results. Presentation of

bibliographic report on the topic.

3. Test on the topic "Essence, history and main functions of the Internet".

4. Research of the non-pedagogical possibilities of multimedia and giving presentation on the topic "My favourite sportsperson". Individual research and creation of database containing photos and videos with examples of the ICT use in the Physical education and sport.

5. Development of report on the topic of ICT integration in the Physical education and sport.

Assessment

The final assessment consists of two equal components:

- current mark (formed on the basis of the student's participation during the semester and the quality of the current tasks completion);
- total mark (average mark from all presented materials and the student's participation in the topic discussions in the forum).

Feedback

A questionnaire is prepared in order for active feedback to be obtained. It is anonymous and aims to give information to the teachers about the education results.

Survey on the students' opinions

According to the survey conducted in 2012/2013 school year, the students' opinions are quite positive and the expectations about the development of the subject in electronic form are excellent. The survey has been conducted with 28 students- 15 men and 13 women.

On the question „*Are you content with the electronic studying in distance form?*”, all answers were positive. Two of the students explained that the electronic education is a very easy and convenient way of studying due to the students' business because it allows "to study at any time – day or night". The rest of the students explain that they were intrigued by this form of education and they studied with great interest.

Did you find it hard to complete the tasks?

Only one person answered that they had little difficulties while the rest answered that they managed to complete the tasks without any difficulties.

Were the studying materials clear and understandable enough?

That is a question to which all students replied positively and add that the materials were presented in an exceptionally interesting manner.

Did you find efficient the teacher's participation in the work with the students?

All students answered that the teacher participated efficiently. One of the students shared the following: "The teacher's presence, amazingly, was permanent. Sometimes I was wandering how it is possible to pay attention on everything, every single detail. I personally had a lot of help by the teacher as I had some difficulties operating the computer. It is really important to be

encouraged in such kind of activities and I can say that without my teacher's support and assistance I would not work with such desire, easiness and confidence".

Do you think that the way of teaching could be improved?

The students' suggestions for improvement are including more Internet sources, more studying materials and provision of bigger popularity of the electronic education.

Can you say that the weekly tasks take up a lot of time to complete?

The students explain that it took them most time to gather information.

Did you have to use other people's aid during the preparation of your weekly tasks?

Almost all students - 25 answered that they did not need any assistance.

Do you think that it would be good some group tasks to be included?

Three persons answered positively while the others disagreed. The ones who disagreed explained their views with the fact that each student has free time at different time of the day which is also the main reason why they enrolled to an on-line course.

CONCLUSION

The presented experience and practice in the report clearly show that the future teachers in Physical education and sport in the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" is conducted in accordance with the contemporary requirements. The electronic education via MOODLE platform gives good results and the students are content with the preparation they received. Each student has unlimited access to the on-line resources and the possibility to share studying in a friendly community of colleagues.

The teachers' willingness is to develop themselves and develop the electronic forms of education in all subjects from the bachelors' and masters' degrees programs.

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