

LEARNING MANAGEMENT THROUGH THE USE OF E-LEARNING IN INITIAL AGRONOMISTS STUDENTS

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Abstract: Management involves organizing learning activities and resources available to achieve maximum efficiency in learning, because time is a limited resource that must be wisely organized. An important aspect of successful management of study time is given by desire: the active involvement of the student, careful planning, prioritization to achieve learning. Management and organizational skills to effectively involve rigorous planning of the time a period crowded to ensure successful completion of the proposed activities and the identification of additional resources for study.

In a broad sense, through e-learning is meant the totality of educational situations using broad information technology and communication means, but applied for pre-service students, e-learning represents a type of distance education, carried out by means of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) and represents an action planned by the teaching and learning of the University that provides mediated materials in a sequential and logical in order to be treated by agronomists students in his own manner.

Through the use of common ICT assets in the process of students determined agronomists changing perception of knowledge from teacher centered to student-centered one. Teachers become students collaborators, they are no longer passive receivers of information, but are actively involved in their own training. To be effective, ICT resources should be combined with traditional means. The teacher's role remains important, combining ICT with traditional means, in order to steer the preparation of students, in order to initiate the research and experimentation and to evaluate correctly their activities with a view to obtaining performance through learning.

Keywords: learning management, e-learning, initial training, agronomists students, Information and Communication Technology

Introducere

It is already proven that time is the most precious resource we have, being considered by specialists more valuable than money, so the capital of time should be used and especially invested with great care.

Time was a resource that seemed sufficient and elastic, but has become an ephemeral and weak resource; our perception of its value has changed in a worrying sense. This fact imposed the awareness that in the modern society we live, the value of time management does not consist in control of time itself, but in how we use the time to improve our lives, because we have more time available. There are at least two kinds of time management: management of what is actually done within a certain time interval and the management of psychological capacity of concentration. Time management is the only way to get things through, and it requires sustained discipline. No time management system works without a solid discipline.

This paper presents aspects regarding the management time devoted to learning, resources and way in which it is done to obtain performance.

AIM OF THE PAPER

We try to prove that life can be really successful only if based on a concept articulated about time, resources and life, summed up as a proper management of time for training. Thus, each agronomy student must become aware that we must make an effort to use the available time and available resources to achieve professional and personal goals. This is the only way they can establish a direct relationship with their task and daily activities on the one hand and ensuring personal satisfaction and progress on the other.

METHODS

There were interviewed the agronomy students and questionnaires were applied on their ability to manage their learning time. Following their interpretation, we concluded that it is necessary to introduce an optional course to the 1st year students called Learning Techniques in which to provide them knowledge of how to manage the learning process successfully by taking into account the differences in the way this was done in secondary education and the specificity of learning in an agronomic university.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The management of learning requires self-regulation by person, the agronomy student, in our case, of their own learning. Self-regulation of learning within the initial training includes *motivational aspects* (cognitions, emotions and behaviours of initiation, targeting and maintaining motivation for learning and capitalizing the opportunities for learning and development) and strategic issues (techniques and strategies used to increase learning efficiency).

Self-regulation of learning refers to the ability of students, in general, and particularly the agronomy students who are preparing for the profession of engineer, economist, veterinarian, teacher or specialist to exert active metacognitive, motivational and behavioural control over learning. The model offered by Zimmerman and Risemberg (1997) distinguishes six dimensions of self-regulation in the context of education that can be applied successfully in agronomic education:

motivation of students (agronomists in our case) to regulate their own process of learning, methods, techniques, strategies used in self-regulation of learning, organizing their study time, self-monitoring the study in order to achieve greater performance, monitoring the environment of the study social dimension of self-regulation (e.g. at need the request of colleagues or teachers, orientation towards models).

It is very important to achieve a good learning management. First there must be clearly established *the motivation for learning* in the initial training of agronomy students, as a spur to learning and involvement in completing tasks. In the society in which we live, learn, work, the social and cultural factors act on the norms, values and practices of learning that form the cultural heritage of a person. It is known that in the Romanian society there are differences between cultures such as the difference between urban culture and rural one or between the culture of families with higher social-economic status and that of the families with lower

social-economic level, different backgrounds from which our students at UASVM come and are found at:

- value given to the school-type learning (for some learning in an university is very important, but for others the experience of life is of greater importance);
- types of interaction that encourages the learning activity (cooperation and competition);
- concepts on competence (for some competence refers to acquiring in-depth knowledge, for others to develop work habits);
- learning experiences they provide (academic skills in current use).

The mechanism by which these issues are reflected in the motivation of an agronomy student for learning must be directed in order to train the youth the skills necessary for learning. Critical thinking plays a very important role. Do not think critically is not to ask questions related to information or ideas presented in class. A person who does not think critically, tends to accept or refuse information or an idea without a prior analysis.

Taking into consideration some studies on how students think, seven basic mental operations were defined that are components of critical thinking. Asking questions on a text, in fact we use the following mental operations:

- updating the specialized information, its sequence and its descriptions;
- making analogies and comparisons – surprising elements that make one or more objects, situations, ideas look alike;
- surprising the contrasts – examining the elements that are different or more situations, events, and facts that make them different;
- surprising the cause – identifying situations that caused a particular event or state of affairs;
- generalization, classification, conceptualization - shift from private to general, from example the general idea;
- exemplifying - customizing a theory or idea, starting from general and searches and a particular example illustrating and / or supporting the idea or theory.

The agronomy students who were questioned on how he/she manages the learning, they responded that it is very important to monitor learning, this representing the systematic checking of understanding and integration of the ideas contained in the text. These include:

- reviewing or over flight text - quickly completing the text to identify the key elements: the titles and subtitles of sections - provides the basic structure of the material, definitions and graphs, maps, figures, photos, questions at the end of the chapter, summarizing the main themes. This step creates a "map" for reading itself, so the student knows exactly where every moment is the logical structure of the text. It also supports the activation of relevant knowledge for the text to be completed.
- asking questions on the text which will be covered - directs the reading and allows the focus on the information of interest. The asking of questions is automatic when a text includes information related to a set of prior knowledge or areas of interest. Transforming titles and subtitles in questions can also be a useful solution;
- clarifying ideas that raise issues of understanding - can be done by calling the above text knowledge or previous knowledge related to them;
- summarizing the text in order to extract the important ideas that will form the backbone of updating.

Organizing the learning material refers to the group with related information into categories and structures to ensure better storage thereof, as follows:

- extracting the main ideas of learning material, and put them;
- to map the content based on existing relationships between ideas; the relationship can be either: cause and effect, the super-ordination or subordination (part-whole), chronological order, narration;
- graphical representation of material as map, graph, matrix, network table.

For a good time management of learning, agricultural students is better:

- Set their personal and social priorities, thus having adequate spare time;
- To draw up a weekly schedule for the activities they conduct;
- Identify that they are personal and social commitments,
- Thus allocating adequate free time
- To check the program drawn up;
- To ensure the necessary flexibility to the program established;
- To relax in order to manage to organize themselves.

In the post-modern society of information and knowledge in which we live, an important role in learning is occupied by ICT means (*Information and Communication Technology*) and the use of *e-learning* in the initial training of agronomy students. Broadly speaking, through *e-learning* it is understood all the educational situations where are widely used the means of information and communication technology, but applied for the initial training of students, *e-learning* representing a type of distance education, achieved by means of *ICT (information and communication technology)* and is a planned action of teaching and learning, organized by the university which provides the material in a sequential and logical order so as to be assimilated by agronomy students in their own way of learning.

Through the frequent use of ICT in the initial training of agronomy students it was determined the change in the way of receiving knowledge from the teacher-centered to the student-centered one. Teachers become collaborators of students, they are no longer passive receivers of information, but are actively involved in their initial training. To be effective, ICT resources should be combined with traditional means. The teacher's role remains important, combining ICT with traditional media means to direct students' preparation for research and experimentation and for their accurate assessment their work in order to obtain performance through learning.

In doing so, they created a wide range of electronic materials (digital media / multimedia) as *educational software*, in order to simplify the process of education: maps, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, didactic videos, presentations in various formats, books (e - books) tests, tutorials, simulations, software forming skills, practice software, educational games, etc. The computer and the electronic materials / media are used to support teaching, learning, assessment or as a means of communication (for making individual tasks, etc.).

In a restricted sense, *e-learning* is a type of distance education, as a teaching - learning planned action, organized by an institution which provides materials in a sequential and logic order to be acquired by students in their own way. Mediation is done by means of *ICT (Information and Communication Technology)* – especially via Internet. The internet is the environment of material distribution as well as the channel of communication between those involved.

Intensive use of ICT means in education has led to changing the way knowledge is received passing from the teacher-centered to the student-centered one. Teachers are no longer just the main source of transmission of knowledge but become employees of agronomy students, and students are no longer passive recipients of information, but are actively involved in their own development.

To be effective, the ICT resources should be combined with traditional means. The teacher's role remains important, especially to guide students preparing to initiate them in research and experimentation and for accurate assessment of their work.

The current generation of agronomy students - "Internet generation" - is closely linked to technology. The simplicity of communication on the Internet encouraged them to seek information and materials to create their communication skills with people all over the world. The web offers research opportunities for students and a source of educational materials for teachers.

The expansion of the Internet has led to the emergence of *online education* and witnessing a diversity of educational offerings, the webspace has become a "vehicle for training", various educational materials being available online: teaching materials, electronic textbooks, software dedicated to training, links to other educational resources. Furthermore, the *online education* has been extended by *teaching through Internet*, by organizing groups of agronomy students, coordinated by a teacher of specialized subjects and using systems of communications between them: e-mail lists, discussion forums, and videoconferences. Recently, it has been organized learning in *virtual classes* - assuming real-time communication. *Networked learning* provides students with complete independence in space and time, but interactive communication is asynchronously done with the teacher; nevertheless it contributes to a better management of learning within initial training of agronomy students.

Conclusions and recommendations

For proper management of time resources necessary for the study, the agronomy students should consider a number of recommendations which identify ways to manage the time resources efficiently while learning. In this regard we recommend:

- to learn to set priorities in terms of goals, tasks and responsibilities;
- to monitor properly the time resources available;
- to divide complex tasks into micro-tasks to be easily achieved;
- to group similar tasks by assigning them a timeframe for settlement;
- to be realistic when he assumes certain tasks in order not to over-organize their schedules, thus preserving a margin of flexibility for certain contingencies;
- to focus on what they do, offering more time for complex tasks;
- to resolve difficult issues in time.

E-learning platforms are very complex teaching systems. Having an e-learning platform on the web, it is highly favoured by the agronomy students in their initial training. The massive use of *ICT* methods leads to a better time management for learning through:

- Increase the quality of teaching – learning process;
- Share knowledge and information among multiple users;
- Increase flexibility of agronomic education.

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