Effective implementation of eLearning - Romanian Language and Literature Classes for University Students in Serbia

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is implementation of new technological possibilities in the process of learning Romanian language and literature at Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad. eLearning at universities in Serbia is not frequent. Some technical faculties have good equipment but the rest of them cannot boast with good technical tools for eLearning, actually we do not have it at faculty level. Teachers are forced to introduce eLearning as much as possible if they consider that this will assist in the process of teaching. For that reason, the lessons of Romanian language and literature are enriched with additional activities – Useful implementation of eLearning. The whole process was monitored for two years. Possibility to choose the way and to use various tools for homework, essays, communication encouraged the students. The results of this study showed that most popular tools are Web 2.0 (social networking sites, blogs, wikis, video sharing sites, hosted services, web applications). Some programs require extended students' depth of knowledge in the content areas. Student's motivation and interest for learning increased.

Keywords: eLearning, Implementation, Process of Teaching, Romanian Language and Literature

1 Introduction

eLearning is an increasingly frequent subject of discussion at universities in Serbia. Technical universities, since it is part of their field, can boast of implementation of advanced technologies, such as eLearning and distance learning. Other faculties cannot provide excellent technological equipment. However, students are increasingly interested in new, modern ways of learning. Therefore, teachers must adapt and offer students all the possibilities that can meet the needs, at least partially. Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, Serbia is well equipped. Each classroom has a computer, projector and four classrooms have smart boards. It often happens that teachers are not sufficiently motivated and trained to use even basic equipment which is offered daily. Faculty management, Vice-Dean for Education, often organizes training for computer skills and working on the smart board. Nevertheless, students increasingly require making the material online available, using social networks in educational purposes, communication and consultation with teachers through social networks, the use of blogs and web applications. Growing interest in the Web 2.0 tools.

2 Literature review

Quality of learning is a major concern for students, their parents, prospective employer, government, and society, in addition to the academic administrators and teachers. Quality is a condition for the success of products in general and quality becomes essential in the field of education in particular (Schreurs & Al-Huneidi). In young ages especially, children can use the huge interactivity of new media, and develop their skills, knowledge, and perception of the world, under their parents' monitoring, of course (Mahanta & Ahmed, 2012).
The World Wide Web has become an increasingly powerful, global and interactive medium for sharing information. The advances of web technologies have boosted development of new learning experiences for students. One of the first types of web application for delivering instruction via the Internet is web-based instruction that is now known as e-learning (Surjono, 2014).

Technology in classroom implies the effective use of technological tools in learning. Educational technology also called e-learning is very important in every part in educational, modern today’s life. Students are increasingly using modern technology, not only for learning but also in social, everyday life (Janjić, 2015).

E-learning includes all forms of electronically supported learning and teaching. The information and communication systems, whether networked learning or not, serve as specific media to implement the learning process (Mahanta & Ahmed, 2012).

E-learning has attracted considerable research and development funding and commercial interest. This has fuelled the creation of a significant body of books, refereed and professional journal articles and reports, and commercial and other Web resources that provide reports of practice, and guidance for the development of e-learning experiences. At the generic level there are a number of implicit and explicit frameworks designed to inform e-learning practice. Founded on earlier theoretical frameworks, or on empirical studies, they identify the factors that need to be considered in pursuit of the creation of good quality e-learning experiences (Gilbert et al, 2007).

Lifestyles and, especially, educational systems giving high priority to using technology as a tool to support the learning processes and to provide learners with the latest professional technological skills (Rhema & Miliszewska, 2011).

Instructional technology and elearning are the key focus of educational teaching, learning and pedagogy. It is associated with lot of innovations and pool of knowledge that provides student with learning experiences at their convenient. The technological innovations of e-learning is altering and profoundly influencing the way teaching and learning are impacted, it is re-defining classroom teaching and learning to extent of its scope, boundaries and pedagogy (Odunaike et al, 2013).

Essentially, e-Learning is another way of teaching and learning. In its broadest definition, e-Learning includes instruction delivered via all electronic media (Govindasamy, 2002).

It afforded alternative ways of communicating with teachers and fellow students, provided a greater variety of learning resources and modalities, extended the flexibility and quality of group-work, and improved the opportunities for providing students with feedback on assessment tasks (Rhema & Miliszewska, 2011). Many proponents of e-learning believe that everyone must be equipped with basic knowledge in technology, as well as use it as a medium to reach a particular goal and aim. Learning is the key to achieving our full potential. Our survival in the 21first century as individuals, organizations, and nations will depend upon our capacity to learn and the application of what we learn to our daily lives (Mahanta & Ahmed, 2012).

eLearning achieves its potential when used repeatedly over time and place by engaged participants. Engaged people seek online lessons and references—and now, in this Web 2.0 world, they also contribute generously, making choices to both consume and create resources (Rossett and Chan, 2008).

3 Useful achievement of eLearning - Romanian Language and Literature Classes: Case Study

Already the first studies (Popović & Janjić, 2012; Janjić et al, 2012; 2013b; 2014c; 2015d; 2015e; 2015f) have shown that introduction of technologies into classes of Romanian language and literature yielded positive results. Professors who have introduced various forms of e teaching and learning, at first could use existing technological knowledge and to apply it in the teaching process. Nevertheless, the needs of teachers and students increased. Students realized that there are opportunities for eLearning with certain professors and progressively more insist on it. Teachers
on the other hand, needed to be more educated in the use of technology by taking an exam and obtaining the ECDL certificate. Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad recognized the needs of its professors and organized a free education for obtaining the European Computer Driving License, as an authorized institution for of taking this exam. Professors continued training by attending courses and workshops that provide more information about eLearning in the process of teaching and learning. One of the latest is the use of smart boards in teaching process. The latest research related to effectiveness of eLearning in the process of learning, as an additional and partial component of teaching and learning, afforded encouraging results. More and more often in the course of teaching Romanian language and literature, but also outside the official classes, were used various forms of e-learning.

3.1 Communication and access to information

The exchange of information is very important in the learning process. When students are informed and instructed in the learning material, motivation grows and the results are better. The best method that gives effects in communication students - professor is Facebook and between professors is email and not so often Facebook. Compared to the first research conducted in 2012 (Janjić et al, 2012), the number of students who used this social network in 2015 has increased considerably.

The reason why students most often communicate with teachers via these social networks are usually the same: They are not under stress when they write on Facebook, have a sense of closeness and friendship with the professors, have the feeling of being accepted, the perspective that is closer to them, it’s not necessary to pay attention to the official and limited correspondence.

At the beginning teachers were incredulous in presenting information on Facebook, as is shown in the survey from 2012 (Janjić et al, 2012), but after certain time realized that all students look for information online, asking questions in groups specifically made for it, reading the postings of their professors, discussion through comments. Therefore the professors part of their free time devoted to publishing posts about the teaching subject at Faculty. These are the most interesting facts about Romania, Romanian language and grammar rules - illustrated by photos, Romanian passages from the literary works - processed at the university, songs, poems, cultural events. The professors of the Romanian language and literature at Faculty of Philosophy daily share links for grammar learning, practicing and reading, also for online reading the books of Romanian writers. In the end it turned out that the students are much more informed and acquainted with the material and with the knowledge of Romania.

3.2 (Online) task assignments

Ability to send task (homework assignments) online or to present through a blog or groups on any of the social networks has opened a lot of possibilities. Also, students selected various programs and presented their tasks. Until 2015, the most common used is Power Point (95%) but from this year there are also Prezi and Smart Notebook. Of course, these programs do not replace Power Point or jeopardize its use, although offered new technological improvements.

3.3 Mobile learning

On the classes of Romanian language and literature becoming widely used mobile phone as an aid in learning. Due to the lack of modern dictionaries and grammars, books for reading, teachers are forced to use the electronic versions and to supply students. Often, these versions are adapted for a mobile phone. Students most often use DEX and Google for translation and explanation of unknown words. Certainly, these two programs cannot be compared. DEX does not provide translation but an explanation in Romanian, from the other side Google translate provides faster but often incorrect translation.
Last year, more students use mobile application for learning Romanian language. They use applications during the breaks between learning process, between lectures and at lectures. The benefit of this learning was also presented during 2015. and this research (Janjić 2015) has given great results.

3.4 eBooks and Internet Public Library

Due to the lack of books at the Department of Romanian studies, professors have explored a whole new world of electronic books. Students require specific books that are related to learning Romanian language and literature and professors offered them a solution that would satisfy their needs. Research (Janjić & Popović, 2015) was carried out about electronic libraries from Romania and opportunities for students in Serbia.

A large number of books needed for teaching and studying Romanian language, is available online. Students were asked to search themselves and to sail into a new world. According to the survey, more than 80% of students use e-books available on the Romanian sites. Links of available books can be found in groups on social networks and blogs. The most visited Online Libraries in Romania are: County Library George Baritiu - Brasov; Central University Library of Bucharest; National Library of Romania; Romanian Academy Library; County Library Octavian Goga – Cluj; Arges County Library - Dinicu Golescu; Central University Library Eugen Todoran – Timisoara.

4 Conclusion

Implementation of all possible and available eLearning tools, facilitate the process of teaching. For students eLearning teaching process is more interesting, they have more learning materials, and most important, everything is available in the form most suitable for them. Based on the survey whether the implementation of eLearning have effective influence the process of studying the majority of students responded (82%) that helps them a lot. All this have influence on improving the relationship between students and professors. Students at the end of the semester conceptually described the possibility of eLearning (Figure 1).
Figure 1. Possibility of eLearning - students' opinions

References


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