# The Problems in Distant - Learning

Veneta Aleksieva[1]

*Abstract* – **In this paper are represented the problems in distant- learning. I focus on the feedback in e-learning as a base method for contact between teachers and students, which is considered from two viewpoints: "student – teacher" and "The learning efficiency".**

*Keywords* – **Distant – Learning, Feedback, Final test, Continual assessment tests**

The achievements of telecommunication technologies pioneered a way for the new technologies advance as teaching and communication tools, which can provide knowledge without the limitation of the traditional way of teaching. These new technologies help very much for the advance of Distant - Learning, used by a huge number of scientific, cultural and trade companies in some form. Today, the tendency is to apply Distributed Education, in which not only is the student is physically separate from the teachers /and the other students/, but he also learns at his own pace and at a time convenient to him. The opportunity for learning and teaching, independent of the time or the place, is much facilitated by the use of Web-based courses.

E-learning should be a response to some requirements which should be leading, when we will develop E-learning, namely:
- Clearly defined a target group
- Clearly and precisely defined learning goals
- Quality content /reliable, modern, achievable, appropriately represented for the target group/
- Proper teaching style /the curriculum will be presented or assimilated by the proper teaching methods– active learning, interactive approaches etc./

Effective communication and feed back which are considered from two view points:
- The Feedback "Student –Teacher" – the student's opportunity to make contact with his teacher /instructor, web- administrator etc./ for various reasons which arise in the learning process
- The Feedback "The learning efficiency" – the teacher's opportunity to estimate from the students' results /tests, exams etc. / the success level, his omissions in the presentation of material and the learning efficiency. The analysis of this type feedback offers the chance to correct the mistakes and omissions and to decrease them in the future by adaptive strategy for presentation to a unique target group

[1]Veneta P. Aleksieva, Technical University, st."Studentska"1, 9000 Varna, Bulgaria,E-mail: ven7066@abv.bg

Most people have traditional education, from kindergarten to the end of their high school education, so they have their own expectation about the methods and the communication tools in relation Student –Teacher. Perhaps they have some of these problems which must be overcome:
- The change of the teaching role - The teacher is more a consultant and an assistant than a leading figure.
- The change of interaction with the students – distance and time influence the teacher's control on the learning process.
- The various communication media – The newest communication network tools are more complex, therefore they demand more experience with them. E-learning provides topic-based forums, on-line conversation, e-mail, newsgroups, on-line tutorials and on-line tests of students.
- The students' isolation – It generates practical and psychological problems and requires the use of new communication network tools, forms and communication skills. There is no competition or contact with other students. The immediate teacher's support is missing too, so the students have more adaptation time. The student is a social individual and he needs to be a member of a very integrated group, which collaborates and has identical goals and tasks.

The fast feedback opportunity is the essence of E-learning, because it can't the use benefits of traditional learning – direct relationship with the teacher, discussions about ideas and problems with other students, to teamwork in skills acquisition. Here the accent is on the cognitive learning, namely the acquisition of knowledge by information adoption and revision, but without monitoring and orientation by the teacher of the developed skills and habits. The student's motivation in E-learning is examined from the teacher's point of view - the feedback is the only tool, with which the needed results are reached.

These exactly appear to be the reasons for the restrictions on E-learning application areas – in scientific areas which demand basic practical skills accumulation, a mixed learning can be applied, but not only E-learning. /Such professions are those of a dentist, a doctor, a pilot, an army, an underwater diver, a fireman etc. /

It is absurd to expect communication by e-mail equivalent to the communication by audio- or videoconference. This fact exactly determines a necessity of including an alternating different technical feedback decisions, as the proportion between them is defined by the target group, the teaching goals, the expected results of a student's success, the teaching style included in the E-learning curriculum.

The feedback from students about their opinion of the weak and strong points of the system and the communication is important for a flexible curriculum adaptation and a change of teaching style /as far as possible/. The analysis of this feedback

provides the opportunity for mistakes correction and their decrease in the future by strategy adaptation for the curriculum presentation according to the characteristics of a target group. It is wrong to search for this feedback at the end of the e-learning course. It is necessary to follow it all through course, because it is a regulator for a maximal student motivation and it tries to meet the student needs and requirements. This feedback traces the personal motivation of each participant. So the number of drop-outs /which at this moment is 30-50%/ is expected to decrease considerably, because the personal motivation has been raised and students' cognitive dissonance will be absent.

In the relationship Teacher-Student the role of grading is important as it is a factor for the student motivation and for his psychical and intellectual advance. At the same time e-learning makes quick and large-scale control in a short time, which necessitates the large application of tests, because tests are the basic form for assessment. This raises the question, "Do tests reflect adequately the present students' skills and knowledge?".

In e-learning test's grading, the form of a question in a test is in the background, but the attention is focused on a correlative relationship among a chosen units. The student's knowledge is assessed on the base of these chosen units, as it analyzes an impartial, indirect, group test for a level of knowledge which is limited in time. It should be kept in mind that grading is an opinion, attitude and assessment of human dignity and insufficient for person. It is a number or verbal expression which measures knowledge or competition of students. Just this fact brings out the impartiality of tests on new ideological level – The impartiality from the viewpoint of ignoring the student's – age, male, race, physical characteristics.

The achievement objectivity depends on the extent to which a subjective estimate of a research-worker is influenced by the test's results, because the test is a method for examination by which in a standard situation reveals personal features. These features are indication for determining a person characteristics and providing the arrangement of a research-person in a classification which is based on a group of comparable persons or based on an ideal standard. In e-learning tests an ideal standard is in a pawn in itself environment which contains a test and is created by a team of teachers to achieve a maximum objectivity assessment.

At the test's base lies suggestive questions which contain in themselves a given alternation. They may be represented in different forms. The test must be formed on the basis of meaningful relations among test items, as it follows a principle of quotas, independent from the question form, their quantity and correlation among separate items in a test.

The continual assessment tests, the grading should be of quantity as well as of quality. It directs the students to the gaps in their learning. Based on this grading, the teacher summarizes for all participants the achieved level and sets up an adequate feedback on two levels:

- Individual – to every participant

- Group - to analyze the tendencies for knowledge gaps in the whole group, which is a basis for additional tasks or directions for self- training

For distinction from continual assessment tests, the final test has a purpose to control the absorption level on whole curriculum. It is single and limited in the time. While continual assessment tests are related with a particular part of curriculum, the final test contents a complex problems which consolidate subject from different lectures. It shows the student's ability to summarize and apply a got knowledge for decision on new practical problems. The structure of a final test is identical with the structure of current tests. The results from final test is estimated, analyzed and reported from the teacher. While by the continual assessment tests the role of rating is only regulative, then by a final fest the rating is summarized. We must be made more precise what is the final test. It may be distant when stay question about summary a part of curriculum and a level (Cisco, Microsoft, Sun и др. ) or working (a course of foreign language, a course of computer literacy etc.). Working tests are more prestige, because a right participant's identification is on default and is ensured necessary circumstances of test control. In general opinion circulate, that the distant-learning hasn't a same weight as the traditional learning. Therefore exactly working test grows up his notability.

Some education organizations resort to make the final working tests which dislocated in different cities in Test centers. This minimizes a charges as from students as for e-learning sponsors. In this case the student in your initiative and wish takes an examination after his whole training. This test hasn't role of a mandatory final test for hold e-learning course, because is possible a person direct take this exam for certification without participate in any course.

The importance characteristics for effective evaluate by take a test is consistency and trustworthiness - the results of estimation will be same if examination in the different time, the other circumstance, from the different teachers. The evaluate trustworthiness means that the independent teachers will be estimate in same way an answer of one person. Exactly e-learning tests reach in this aspect very high trustworthiness.

The traditional learning models can't to expand to meet the challenge of new generation. In other side distant-learning may be improve /or substitute / the traditional methods and materials /a classroom discussions, a practical occasions, an imprint book/

The last years of globalization demonstrate that learning and teaching from distant, especially when is used the high-speed telecommunication technologies is effective, because the effectivity is measure with the student's achievements, the reversion of an investment, the relationship of the students and the teachers to learning process.

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