

It is significant that in the process of learning Russian foreign students form verbal competences, acquire new knowledge in professional spheres that promotes social adaptation in their native country.

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**Система контроля знаний как вопрос, требующий исследования, в дистанционном образовании**

**The system of knowledge control as a challenge to distance education**

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*Аннотация* Осенью 2003 года, подписав Болонскую декларацию, Российская Федерация вступила на путь унификации стандартов образования. Информационные технологии набирают растущую популярность, в частности системы дистанционного обучения представляют наибольший интерес. С большой долей вероятности можно предположить, что такие системы станут неотъемлемой частью образовательного процесса. С постоянно растущей популярностью дистанционного образования возникает вопрос качества и контроля знаний в такой системе обучения. Авторы статьи предприняли попытку описать существующий опыт Байкальской Международной Бизнес Школы и представляют цели, функции и проблемы системы контроля знаниями в системе дистанционного обучения БМБШ Гекадем.

**Ключевые слова** дистанционное образование; контроль знаниями; методология; методы обучения; образовательные технологии; материалы курса.

**Summary** Having signed the Bologna declaration in the fall of 2003, Russian Federation has directed towards unified standards of education. Information technologies are gaining more and more popularity, particularly the systems of distance education (SDE) are of greater interest. It may well be assumed such systems will become an inseparable part of the educational process. With the rise of popularity for distance education there appears the issue for the quality and control of knowledge in such a system of learning. The authors of the article have attempted to summarize the existing experience in Baikal International Business School in terms of goals, functions and challenges of the system of knowledge control in the SDE of BIBS Hecadem.

**Key words** distance education; knowledge control; methodology; learning methods; educational technologies; course materials.

Having signed the Bologna declaration in the fall of 2003, Russian Federation has directed towards unified standards of education. Information technologies are gaining more and more popularity, particularly the systems of distance education (SDE) are of greater interest. It may well be assumed such systems will become an inseparable part of educational process.

In her article on "The Issues of Distance Education Implementation in Russian Federation", Evgenyia S. Polat states it is too late to prove the economic, political, and educational importance of the distance education system in the country. She claims that distance education has already been an established fact both in foreign countries and Russia. E. S. Polat brings the following data of Russian education ministry in her article - "In 2002 200,000 students studied in more than twenty universities if the country via distance learning obtaining undergraduate and graduate degrees. Currently, the Federal net of universities RUNNet is being developed in Russia. The net unites 25 regional segments of large scientific educational institutions ... The creation of Russian State University of Distance Education is planned." [6]

The most urgent problem in the process of unified educational standards implementation both in online and onsite education is the problem of control methods and grading criteria Improvement. Contemporary pedagogics and teaching methodology offers diverse scholars' opinions on control and grading

of the students' knowledge regardless the level of education they are obtaining - be it elementary, secondary, high school or university education. Though he accepts and supports the idea of knowledge control A.M.Novikov emphasizes the following opinion in his book "Methodology of Learning Activity". Novikov states that a grade often reflects a sort of formality and is often a source of students' stressful burden; quite sometimes the real face if the student is lost in the grades. Quite often it happens so that when a student comes home from school, his or her parents ask what grades were acquired and not the new and interesting knowledge the student gained and what he learned. This may well bring a premise to grade dependence and "grade dependence often leads to simply corrupt thinking..." Therefore, Professor Novikov doubts the necessity of giving grades in every class in school. His supposition is that "excessive control depraves the student, makes him a slave..." and furthermore, it makes his university studies very hard and complicated as the student is not accustomed to work and learn without permanent teacher's control. And it is impossible in the system of higher education. [5, p. 153] indeed, the students become less responsible and more immature due to the lack of skill to control their study process on themselves. A.M.Novikov assumed there could have been other approaches to control and grading. And he proved his assumption with the works of Sh.A.Amonashvili, who supplied the proofs to ability to switch to ungraded system of teaching in the elementary school, where he proposed to supply more informative and beneficial to the student characteristics rather than a pure grade [5, p. 154].

Professor Denis Rancourt, a former physics professor at University of Ottawa believes that checking and grading is nothing but suppression [8]. Rancourt supporting the ideas of Critical Pedagogy states "Grades are a carrot-and-stick approach to raising obedient employees who prepare students to even deeper obedience. The only way to upbringing independent thinkers is the allowance of freedom (to students) and destruction of educational force by depletion of the force's " [3, p. 21] is that the approach that should be used for raising and foster-

ing future student-millennials generation? The issue is open for research and discussion in further publications.

This approach is highly criticized by the classical pedagogy representatives. V.Bespal'ko, a non-traditional pedagogy (conformable to nature) supporter, calls the pedagogy of Rancourt anarchical and his teaching methodology in the university erroneous. He claims that Rancourt is most likely unaware with the "natural structure of the process of knowledge acquisition - from an initial orientation in the subject matter to its deep and controlled learning activity - to final knowledge quality assessment and - from assessment to correction of the targeted deviation from the subject matter scrutiny. Only upon subject matter mastery at a certain level a student may successfully perform." [3, p. 22]. Harry Shaier, a professor in British Columbia University in Canada, states the arguments about grading have been fairly old. His premise is that grades truly hinder the process of cognition and learning in many cases. However, they are the quickest and most effective way to check the knowledge and skills of a student. He says, "This is the tightrope all professors need to walk on, though it is a sorrowful reality of the world." [7]

Apparently, academic society including both contemporary faculty and students is not ready to refuse from the system of knowledge control and preserve the desire for learning and acquiring new skills and knowledge. Therefore, the authors of the article have attempted to describe the functions and goals of the system of knowledge control in the existing distance education system Hecadem of Baikal international Business School, as well as to highlight current challenges.

The system of knowledge control in distance education should solve three problems - estimate and monitor the progress of a student (from the entry level to the completion level), discriminate knowledge acquisition in a studying module, and identify the student so that it is proven the student receiving the certificate is the same person who studied.

The lack of identification means for the studies and testing while doing an online course causes "the black market for the educational services", when students fulfill the assignments not by themselves but they attract subcontractors for that. Within this problem a following solution might work - onsite face-to-face exams which imply personal presence of the student during the exam or online testing with video surveillance. The second approach to problem solving may involve attraction of outsider-experts, however, the high speed and tempo of the testing and oral answers of students decrease the availability of cheating. If a distance education course does not have any means of student identification, it is almost impossible to check the student's proficiency quality. In this case the learning process is turned into a diploma or certificate sale.

The system of distance education should take into account and consideration intermediate as well as final testing and knowledge control within a course. Intermediate control allows to check certain modules of the course and may be included as a part of a final grade; it also may be a prerequisite for the following studies blocks (for instance, if a student gets an unsatisfactory grade on the test, he or she is redirected for the same learning module to repeat it. In this case it impacts the timing for the course completion, as the next try for the module testing is available after a while.). To avoid the situation of test question copying and cheating on the second test attempt, the questions and assignments in the second try should not only differ from the first try, it they need to be more complicated.

'Hecadem' system of Baikal International Business School allows to apply several educational technologies. They are:

- Learning path choice allocation for the student. The path choice implies either the selection of the course immersion depth (i.e. the amount of course materials and assignments complexity) or course sequence indication.

- Entry and exit tests may be arranged in a way of either individual tests and assignments or group forms of knowledge control (seminars, conferences, group projects, wiki-projects).
- Time control through time setting for a test availability and test timing (the time may be fixed for an online test, after which the access to the test is closed, and the paper's points are subtracted).

The system of the entry knowledge control may serve two purposes:

- initial knowledge estimation;
- prerequisite courses knowledge acquisition estimation. This way the knowledge which is required to be gained prior to the next course is tested.

The first purpose implies and imposes thorough scrutiny of tests system which demonstrates absolute result in course knowledge acquisition or one module learning outcome. If one and the same test is given as an entry and exit test, the risk appears for a student to prepare only for exactly the same questions as he or she was given at the beginning. In such situations the questions in the entry test should be more general and the exit test needs to structure and rearrange the questions of the entry test.

Prerequisite course learning outcomes should be checked and tested, if the following course or module is not clear and understandable for the students without particular knowledge foundation. Testing should reflect the knowledge which is required prior to the module or course, however diverse learning trajectories should be taken into consideration (if there is a shorter path to course studies prior to a certain module, the testing should focus on the minimal amount of knowledge offered by the previous modules and learning blocks).

One separate challenge here is the controversy among authors who tutor the course and dispute in terms of theory and practice of management. Let us not elaborate on various case studies but financial indicators calculation may be done in numerous ways (e.g. Revenue part of the budget calculation may be done with or without value-added tax, budget flow May or may not include

amortization, the average cost of capital may be calculated in accordance with the variety of complex formulas).

Consequently, if a student thinks he or she knows one or the other module of a distance course from other resources, then the entry test may score fairly low, but throughout the course the student starts understanding the concepts used by the author of the course and as a result may score higher. This may be a problem of Arts majors, and to solve this problem a course should always contain references and links to the author's concept used in the course.

To diminish the risk of testing without enough time investment in the course materials studies, tests should include specific questions discussed within the course or a module.

One of the useful mechanisms for knowledge control may become the open questions type which offers a student to research a topic in reference to the company he is working for or his business or project he or she is involved at. In this case a student is additionally motivated to actually complete the assignments and tests on his/her own, because tutor provides consulting services for the urgent project of the student.

The control mechanisms may be divided into group ones and individual ones. Group projects, seminars, discussions, group researches may be joined into a group mechanism of control. A group project implies a group of students participating in a solution of a problem. Such control mechanism provides a student with an additional benefit to the student, as it allows to integrate the knowledge of multiple participants, to foster communication skills, as well as to exchange experience with the other students. To improve the effectiveness of this approach to knowledge control one must take into consideration the dynamics, progress, and contribution of each project's participant. It means there mustn't exist only the final project's grade but also the check of the progress of each project's contributor. The system of distance education should support joint data bases and libraries, foster and facilitate discussions and files exchange in such situations.

Seminars as an approach to group work allow to test and check not only the volume of knowledge gained but also the scope and topic comprehension. A seminar presupposed the development of basic questions which the students discuss in the group. Formal wording is not applicable in such a case because a student is required not only to express his or her opinion, but also comment the posts of other students. A moderator plays an important role in a seminar who needs to lead the discussion and if the students do not follow the discussion or borrow comments from other resources then a moderator gives a warning.

Regardless the approach to knowledge control it is worth mentioning that a student must be motivated for self-studies and exit testing. Consequently, the course materials should not only be theoretically precious but also valuable in practice. And assignment completion should represent additional value for the student which will help structure, research, and solve specific students' issues.

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**Научно-исследовательская работа как неотъемлемая часть современного школьного образования**

**The research work as an important part of modern school education**

**О.С. Овчинникова**

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**Аннотация** Традиционно считается, что научно-исследовательская деятельность осуществляется в ВУЗе, но формирование типов и стилей мышления происходит значительно раньше, поэтому научно-исследовательская работа должна стать неотъемлемой частью школьного образования. Каждый год обучающиеся школ нашего города принимают участие в научно-практической конференции, на которой они должны представить научно-исследовательский проект по разным предметам. В статье мы рассматриваем, что представляет собой научно-исследовательский проект по предмету «Английский язык».

**Ключевые слова** научно-исследовательский проект; проблема; содержание; структура работы; критерии оценивания.

**Summary** It is traditionally considered that the scientific research work is carried out in higher education institutions only. But the development of types and ways of thinking happens much more earlier. That's why the research work should be an important part of school edu-