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ПРОБЛЕМЫ ОБУЧЕНИЯ ТЕХНИЧЕСКИМИ ДИСЦИПЛИНАМИ ЧЕРЕЗ ПЛАТФОРМУ MOODLE

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ISSUES WHEN LEARNING TECHNICAL SUBJECTS VIA THE MOODLE PLATFORM

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Аннотация. *Ресурсы в платформе электронного обучения, несомненно, полезны и удобны для обучения студентов. Использование платформы Moodle для обучения технической дисциплине требует некоторой осторожности, учитывая, что некоторые задачи должны быть выполнены в реальном выражении и в непосредственном контакте с лекторами.*

Abstract. *The resources of the electronic learning platform are undoubtedly useful and convenient for students' education. Using „Moodle" platform when learning technical subjects requires more caution due to the fact that some of the tasks to be performed need to be carried out under real conditions and in direct contact with teachers.*

Ключевые слова: *платформа электронного обучения, проблемы.*

Keywords: *e-learning platform, issues.*

Fast-paced technologies, new program applications and software versions are entering all areas of human life. Education, being one of the most important of them, should not lag behind in that respect. Based on existing scientific achievements and effective technologies, new trends of development for this area emerge.

The existing e-learning platforms, as well as those yet to be developed, provide new perspectives to education. They are related to possibilities for innovations in various aspects of education [1].

E-learning is the type of learning that uses LAN (Local area network), WAN (Wide area network) or Internet to deliver knowledge and interaction between a teacher and a student. Electronic learning emerges in global information society to meet the requirement for flexible education accessible at any time [2]. Its objective is:

1. To be accessible for everybody irrespective of location and time.
2. To be more efficient, assisted by the implementation of up-to-date pedagogical and organizational solutions, as well as by ensured up-to-date mechanisms supporting students and teachers while performing various tasks.
3. To be more attractive to users, providing adapted tasks and resources.

There are several factors that stimulate penetration of technologies in education by attempting to bring it to students' home, job place and residence location, the need of permanent learning, even when impossible to part with daily appointments, internationalization and globalization of higher education.

Electronic learning has its advantages:

- It grants you with quick, easy and timely access to the course contents.
- Interactivity presents the information in a new and interesting way – audio, video, data base, etc.
- It is up to you to decide how much and when you will study.
- Via the e-learning portal you will have 24/7 access to your learning from any location worldwide.
- The simple navigation and the module principle make acquisition of new knowledge, skills and attitude fun and easy.
- The electronic system is subject to continuous development and offers more and more features.

Electronic learning gains popularity in Bulgaria and worldwide. It expands the circle of learners. People with fewer opportunities and people from distant areas

are able to have e-learning. In front of your computer at home you will be able to complete a course.

However, despite its advantages, e-learning has also disadvantages:

- No live contact;
- There are some technical constraints related to the internet connection speed, certain hardware and software standards have to be complied with;
- The level of technical skills of the participants to the course, including also of the teacher;
- Organizing that type of studying requires significant additional investments at its initial stage.

Moodle is a system for management of courses – open-code product, created to assist teachers in establishing efficient online learning communities at any location. Moodle's features as e-learning system include the following major items and functions (fig.1):

- to check-in and check-out trainees;
- to publish all kind of text and illustrative materials;
- to seek for feedback via questionnaires;
- to prepare test materials;
- to set course project assignments;
- tools for assessment;
- forums;
- exchange of messages (messaging);
- its own electronic mail (e-mail).

Fig. 1 — Moodle Platform

Moodle functionality allows the academic team to track and manage the learning process, thus enhancing the quality of teaching. Via the system teachers are able to enrich their lectures, by attaching all type of files – text, pictures, audio, multimedia, data base, programs. The system allows linking the learning material of a certain lecture to other global network resources (web sites, search sites, blogs). The possibility to have a forum and a chat to each course allows the teacher to assess the students through them. Specific convenience is the possibility for the teacher to receive at his/her e-mail address all new course forums postings of the students and to send simultaneous messages to all his/her students or just to a sub-group.

An innovative solution of contemporary teaching is the possibility for the teacher to conduct online tests via the system and to analyze them. The system also ensures contemporary means of communication – it provides functionality for online assignment of tasks to students, their examination and assessment, and also discussion on their performance. It allows feedback by means of comments on the results and monitoring of students' activity and their most visited places in the course.

Statistics shows that Moodle platform at New Bulgarian University is used by approximately 15 000 users, both university students and approx. 500 teachers. Access statistics shows that on a daily basis platform services are used by 1000 to 4500 users – this number varies depending on the period – holidays or examinations, and also on the day of the week – business day or holiday [3].

Traditional auditorium studies of technical subjects pass through the modules displayed on the structural diagram (fig. 2). In this way, after students have acquired knowledge in the theoretical course they apply said knowledge in tasks solving and

in practical exercises. Direct contact with the teacher helps clarify questions raised during the study. Current control and test procedure assist in knowledge affirmation.

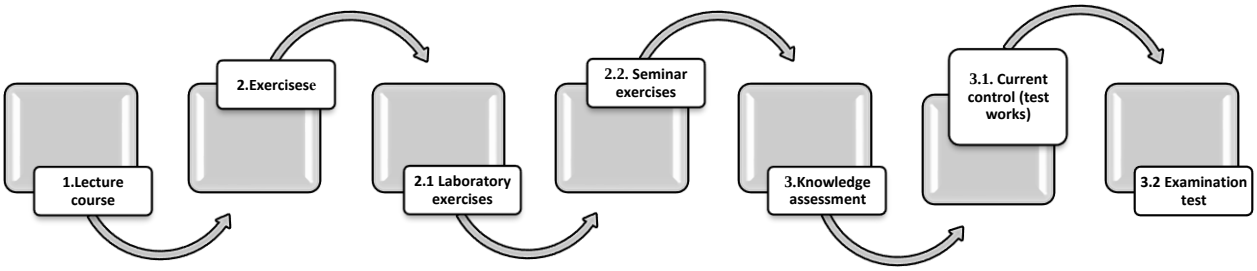

Fig. 2 — Structural diagram of education

The electronic platform changes some parts of this educational structure, replacing it by demonstrations, online tests and other assisting activities. The issues of using Moodle platform for technical subjects are attributable to the following:

1. Laboratory and practical exercises held require student's active involvement at site;

2. The test forms used as forms of control do not always provide an objective vision of students' knowledge and skills.

3. Students' knowledge in the attached materials remains just theoretical and is not sufficient for an objective assessment.

In conclusion, taking into consideration all advantages of electronic learning, it is recommended that traditional educational structure of technical subjects is preserved to a great part, while the materials available in the Moodle platform just supplement and prepare students for their real work in the subject.

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