Some Issues on e-Learning Implementation in EHEA with Respect to Virtual and Physical Mobility

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Professional background

- Teacher at the Technical University of Kosice (www.tuke.sk)
  - eight Faculties, approximately ten thousands students
  - subjects "Information Systems in Industry", "Management Skills"
- Involvement in several EU projects in last decade
  - Coordinator & Contractor of two EU projects (Socrates ODL, Tempus)
  - around 14 institutions across Europe with total budget cca 600.000 EUR
- Director of software company I.C.T., Ltd. (www.uLern.com)
  - development of e-learning platform and portal solutions
  - development of multimedia training packages

Content

- e-Learning Opportunities & Threats
- Some Notes and Recommendations
- Case Study - University e-Learning Implementation

Some Opportunities of e-Learning

i. Routine activities of teachers are automated (e.g. test evaluation)

ii. The teacher is more in position of advisor ("good friend") and in position of developer of multimedia training materials.

iii. The teacher can ask students to study lecture in advance, following he can have more time for explanations or personnel contact with students.

iv. Students have available multimedia database of knowledge on Internet.

v. Students are not forced to memorize information (too much available) but to work with information in creative way.

vi. Elimination of dependency on time and place of education, especially suitable for disabled persons.

vii. Development of database of knowledge with possibility of course sharing and last but not least, building of transparency of EHEA.

Some Threats of e-Learning

i. Teacher's personality including human contact is crucial for any educational process and it cannot be replaced by only technology.

ii. Web as filtered environment – students can be anonymous, they can become very good technicians but with low empathy and social feeling.

iii. Time-consuming and expensive course development, teachers have to do their "normal" job plus e-learning.

iv. At present, too static learning programs and problems with proper pedagogical approaches.

v. Technical requirements and limitations as low bandwidth, etc., can threat equal opportunities and social cohesion.

vi. Web security threats - no central control, no embedded "immunity",

vii. Possibility to build a closed environment "a la Matrix".

A major strategic goal in Europe

"to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-driven economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion".

Lisbon European Council, March 2000

What are the threats?

If we want to be "the most competitive" (de facto "a world ruler"),

we will get a responsibility for developing regions a countries,
and we should not think only on our "better jobs",

following, we should be more in position of "servant" as of "ruler".

In mentioned context, HOW should we educate a next generation?

HOW should we use ICT, e-learning, virtual universities, etc.?

…to ensure "sustainable growth" and "social cohesion"…

General Recommendation

From ethical and didactical point of view, teacher's personality including human contact is crucial for any educational process and it cannot be replaced by only technology.

BUT AT THE SAME TIME

Specialized ICT supported services as easy-to-use portal solutions will provide opportunities to build more transparent EHEA with well balanced blended learning that should support creativity, personnel development, and social cohesion of all parties.

General Recommendation

To promote substantial research effort

on proper implementation of e-learning technologies in EHEA

with special emphasis on social and ethical consequences.

Recommendations in details

NOT to build too "high-tech" and sporadic virtual universities,
BUT user-friendly ICT services for all (e.g., course sharing portals),

NOT to educate very "narrow" specialists without social competences,
BUT students with both technological and social competences,

NOT to separate e-learning from face-to-face learning,
BUT preferably use "blended learning" with simple and useful portals,

NOT to separate Virtual Mobility from standard Erasmus program,
BUT use Virtual Mobility as ICT support of standard Erasmus program

Additional Recommendation

One of the main conclusions of the Barcelona conference (on teachers-ICT) was that the problem is often not a lack of willingness but a lack of time.

In the actual teaching situation teachers
have to do their "normal" job plus e-learning.

Structures should be developed to make sure that this kind or work is similarly appreciated in academic environment as teaching or research.

Concept of „Blended Mobility"

e-Learning became successful when „blended" concept was introduced, i.e., combination of face-to-face meetings with ICT support of e-learning.

Students prefer Physical Mobility because of foreign language training, cultural exchange, and new course knowledge as well.

From this point of view, Physical Mobility is partly a quite expensive „tourism agency".

How to reduce „tourism costs" and intensify course training?

Concept of „Blended Mobility"

IMAGINE:

A student will look on video lectures of foreign Professor through well developed Course Sharing Portal and he will decided...
„Yes, he is my guide..."

Student will use Virtual Mobility to enter specific course, and finally, after two months of using of e-learning provisions, he will enter Physical Mobility for 2-3 weeks to personally discuss and consult all topics with Professor.

And what will we get?
Reduction of costs, international experience, quite intensive training, AND no lack of „human contact" that is crucial for any educational process.

Valuable source of Recommendations…

Studies in the Context of the E-learning Initiative:
Virtual Models of European Universities (Lot 1)
(Final Report to the EU Commission, DG Education & Culture, March 2004)

The Danish consultancy PLS RAMBOLL Management has carried out a strategic study of virtual models of universities for the European Commission, DG Education and Culture during 2002-2003. The aim of the study was to provide the Commission with a report concerning the current and potential future use of ICT by European universities.

"Universities are recommended either to develop a specific ICT strategy or to integrate ICT into their general university strategy."

Case Study

on University e-Learning Implementation

- e-Learning Implementation at the Technical University of Kosice (Slovak Republic, Central Europe)
- Coordinated by Rector of the University and Dean of the Faculty of Electrical Eng. & Informatics, financially supported by Ministry of Education of Slovak Republic and by private company I.C.T., Ltd.
- A case of quite large educational institution with eight Faculties and approximately ten thousand students (www.tuke.sk).
- The University e-learning implementation projects :
  - Project 2002 (finished)
  - Project 2003 (finished)
  - Project 2004 (on-going)

Case Study

General Issues on e-Learning Implementation

i. Careful analysis and planning regarding to business drivers, content, learners, technology, tracking, etc.

ii. Secure executive sponsorship and financial funding (or who is going to pay for this?).

iii. Select technology (long-term impact) and content (off-the-shelf courses, custom courses, or custom courses using outsourcing).

iv. Gain acceptance – from both employees and their managers (start small to build confidence, involve instructors early on, make training, trial projects, involve external skills, etc.).

v. Ensure enterprise-wide implementation aimed at making a significant impact.

vi. Evaluate and measure your institutional benefits.

Case Study

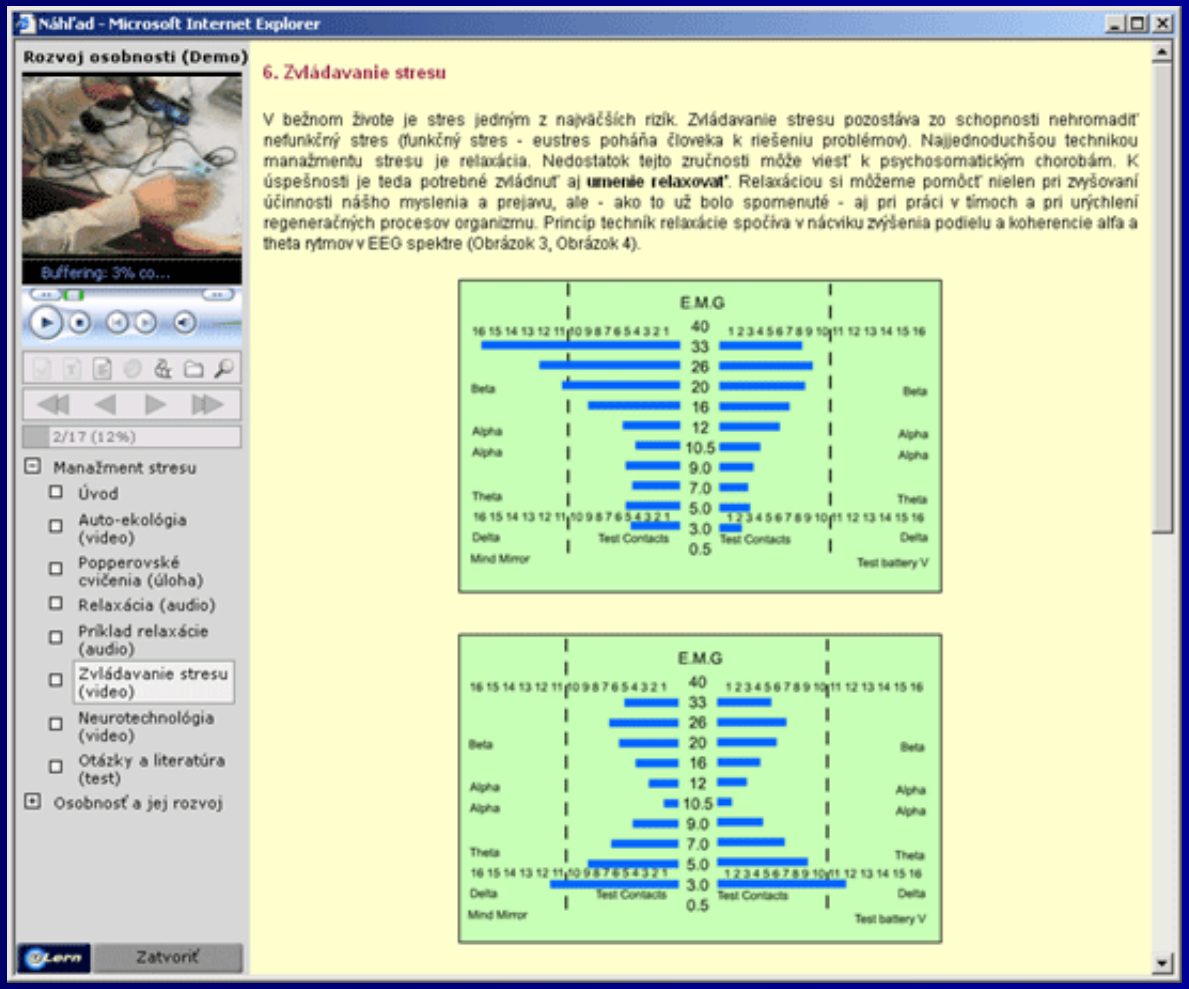
e-Learning Implementation at the TU Kosice - Project 2002

Main achievements:

- Analysis of e-learning implementation at the University resulting to the selection of common e-learning platform (possibility of adaptation, Slovak localization, reduction in price, etc.)
- Development of three University e-Learning Centres supporting educational and development activities of eight Faculties.
- Courses for University teachers focused on development and design of e-learning courses on selected platform.

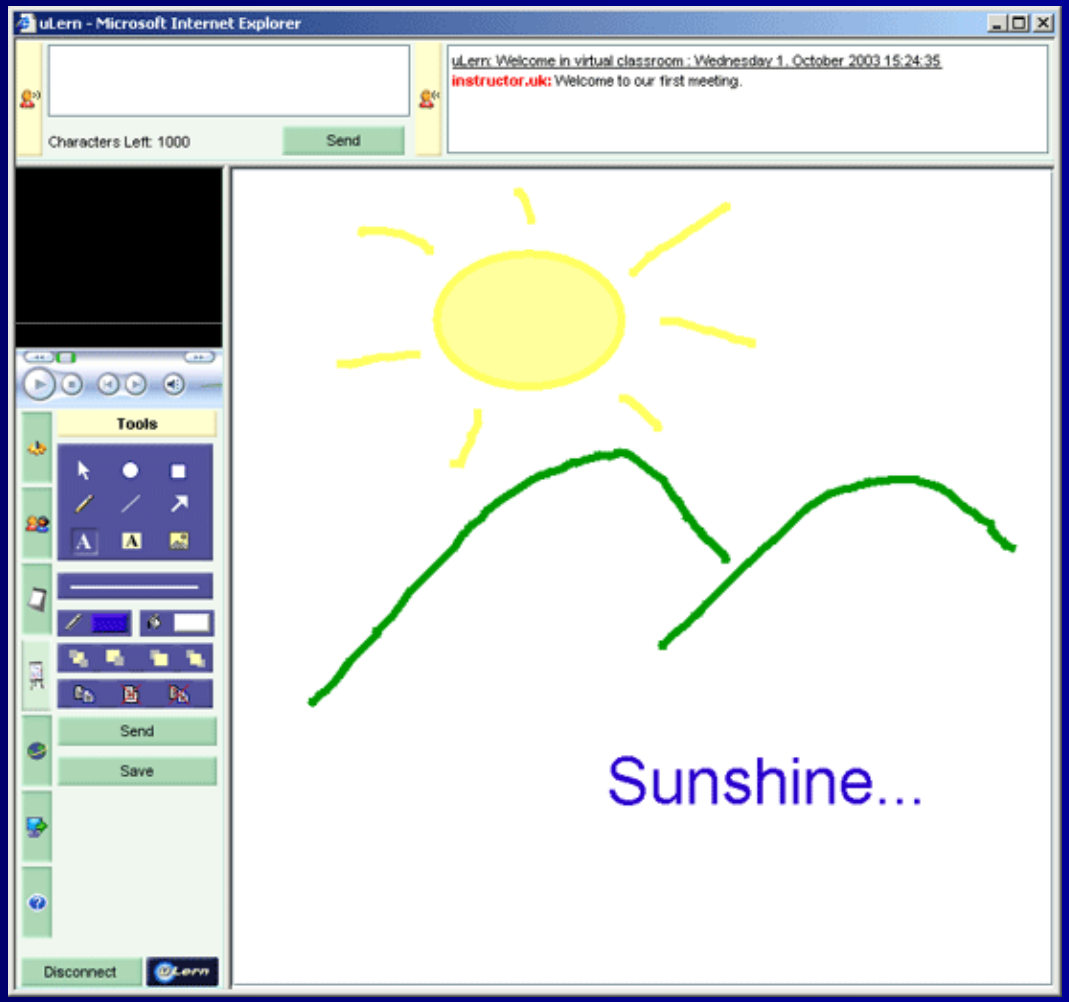
Choice of the Web Learning Environment

uLern platform (www.uLern.com) – Lecture window



Choice of the Web Learning Environment

uLern platform – Virtual Classroom (Whiteboard)



Case Study

e-Learning Implementation at the TU Kosice - Project 2003

Aimed at continuous support of e-learning activities:

- Building the University e-Portal as a central point for e-learning activities.
- Development of specialized course "e-Learning ABC" that deals with basic knowledge in the field of e-learning technology and didactics.
- Courses for University teachers focused on development and design of e-learning courses.
- Development of pilot e-learning courses (around 40 during one semester).
- Implementation of the Quality Assurance System for course development.
- Establishment of the University e-Learning Board coordinating activities of eight Faculties.

Case Study

University e-Portal (based on technology uLern Portal 1.0)

Case Study

e-Learning Implementation at the TU Kosice - Project 2004

Main outcomes should be as follows:

- Evaluation of e-learning experiences and suggestion of adaptations.
- Human resources development including courses for teachers, seminars, and workshops.
- Optimalization and adaptation of common e-learning platform, integration with the University information system, off-line synchronization of courses, etc.
- Further development of e-learning courses and their use in online teaching and training.

...we are still on beginning...

Case Study

Recommendations for e-Learning Implementation

I. Teachers and students have enough skills to use PC & Internet.

II. Teachers and students have available quality technical facility, i.e., hw/sw/Internet connection and user-friendly environment.

III. Teachers are well trained and motivated (financially as well).

IV. Students are well trained and motivated (good level of courses).

V. Support of management of institution incl. finances.

VI. Daily patient work, do not expect very fast results, as bonus you will get a systemized database of knowledge.

VII. e-Learning is only technology that should support creativity and personal development of students and teachers. We must avoid to be the "modern slaves" of technology.

Thank you for attention…

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