

# COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF A MANAGER. PROJECT FOR E- LEARNING

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This article is dealing with the issues concerning creation of e-learning course Manager's Communication Skills. The use of e-learning systems, together with the development of information technologies, has growing tendency. This article describes the types of e-learning systems, positives and negatives and also components that the e-learning systems should involve. I've decided to create the electronic educational course with the topic of Manager's Communication Skills in system Moodle, which is also used at the Faculty of Aeronautics in Kosice. The material in this course is dealing with managerial competences, communication as such and also communication skills.

**Key words.** E- learning, Moodle, Managerial competence, Communication, Communication skills of a manager

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Experts in the area of education are dealing with the question, how to make study more interesting and effective. The answer could be e-learning systems that are used by growing amount of educational institutions. E-learning system Moodle belongs to so called Open source, also known as shareware, which is a clear advantage for the final user. In the course that I've created in system Moodle I tried to implement multimedia means that help students better to absorb the study material. Manager's task is to direct, lead and affects the workers and their potential. To execute their work on the professional level, they have to know some aspects, that term „communication“ covers.

## 2 E- LEARNING

There are many definitions of e- learning, in general we can say it is an effective use of information technologies in learning process. Natural growth of society informatization level, results in most of us already encountered the term e-learning or even used it. There are of course some areas, where use of e-learning is impossible, but in today technological situation we only rarely come to this conclusion. Mainly in the present time, with growing internet, telecommunications, and the dropping price of workstation, we almost always find the solution to how the information technologies can make the education more effective, faster and cheaper. E-learning can be offered in on-line or off-line form, which means

we can use it through internet or with the help of transfer units, for example USB-key.

### 2.1 The types of e- learning

E- learning can be presented in combination with other forms of teaching, or in form of total distance education .

- Blended e- learning- is mostly used in combination with other type of teaching, for example class led by a teacher. That can guarantee better effectiveness of education and at the same time integrate class work into everyday life. Blended e- learning offers the possibility of study in synchronous form, ergo form where all those participating in the course are connected at the same time, or asynchronous form, where the students are educated in the different time horizons.
- Fully distance education allows the study, where the students don't meet the teacher physically. The main function of the teacher is to create study material and to evaluate the results of students work, that they provide in electronic form

### 2.2 Benefits versus drawbacks of e- learning

Between main benefits of e- learning belongs the possibility to study at any time and any place with the use of an appropriate electronic equipment, reduction of transport, accommodation and class room costs to a minimum, possibility to go through each chapters on students own speed. E- learning helps students orientate in the amount of information's, separate and correctly use them

for their need. Information's in e- learning system can be updated at any time, which is a huge advantage when informing the students about new knowledge or trend. The teacher in e- learning system is in position of mentor and creator of study materials. Because he don't have to explain each part of the topic personally, he's got more time in combinational teaching to go deeper into more difficult questions or to make visual explanations.

The main drawbacks are the costs of creating the content of e- learning courses, which can be relatively high. For e- learning system to be able to function correctly it is important to fulfill precise demands to technological infrastructure. Many people prefer conventional study, because e- learning represents a new form of education, which can invoke dismissive attitude. To study the materials independently from other members of the course demands a lot of self-discipline. The computer can not replace personal communication between the teacher and the student, which can lower the motivation. Time seriousness of creating study materials and the seriousness of control of elaborated assignments are the negatives, which this form of study brings.

### 2.3 The design of e- learning course

When designing e- learning course should respect some rules to implement in its structure:

- Definition of educational targets, which describes content and educational strategy
- Pre- test, where students can measure their knowledge in the actual issue a find out, which areas they have to focus on
- Content of subject with use of different parts of interactivity, processed to attractive form
- Final exam, where students can test the level of their knowledge compared to results from the test before the course.

When choosing the tactics of teaching we apply different theories, principles and concepts, which depend of the content, situation and students. It is important to choose the right mixture of teaching theories that brings the desired results for the actual case.

Teaching strategies represent arrangement of content, educational methods and activities.

There is no general strategy, which would define the content of each course, but we can create the right strategy from the parts, such as visual explanations and presentations, audio presentations of the content, case studies and simulations.

### 3 E- LEARNING SYSTEM MOODLE

The biggest credits for creation of system Moodle go to Martin Dougiamas, who also leads its development in present time. As a student of Curtin University he was managing the e- learning system WebCt, in which he noticed gaps and tried to repair them. He was convinced there is huge potential in teaching with the help of the internet. With that stimulation he started on bachelor and later master study in the areas of training and education. He started the development in 1999 and 3 years later, 20th August 2002, published the first version 1.0. Through the whole time of development we get new updated versions, which offer new components, better working comfort and improved performance.

Martin Dougiamas established so called social constructivistic pedagogy, which is based on a certain type of thinking. The four basic beliefs of social constructivistic pedagogy are:

- Constructivism
- Constructionism
- Social constructivism
- Connected and separate behavior

Moodle is being used to create e- learning courses with the help of internet and belongs to LMS (Learning management system) systems. The cost of obtaining Moodle for any school is nominal. It's easy to use and there are other possibilities, like adding lectures, discussions, tests and others. The teacher can decide whether he'll publish the subject in form of topics, which are available right away or in weekly format, which means it would be uncovered in certain time intervals. Active participation of students is easy to follow by their activities in the course, for example adding to discussions, providing answers to problems and take in exams and tests.

## 4 ANALYSES OF MOODLE AND CREATING OF COURSE IN THIS SYSTEM

Main reason why I choose to make my e-learning course in system Moodle was relatively easy but effective user environment and also fact, that the system is used at the Faculty of aeronautics at Technical university in Kosice. Mr. RNDr. Peter Szabó PhD., who is one of the administrators of this system at the faculty of aeronautics created course called Communication skills of manager and he assigned me the role of course creator which entitles me to all activities necessary to create e- learning course.

### 4.1 Steps of course launching

- In your internet browser start following website: <http://www.moodle.leteckafakulta.sk/>
- In left menu in file "course categories" click on "All courses"
- Find bookmark "Final Works KMLP" and click on course "Communication skills of manager".
- In case you already are a registered user in system Moodle log on with your log in details. If you are not registered you can sign in as a host. However some functions are limited in host access for example taking tests.

The direct link to course Communication skills of manager is: <http://www.moodle.leteckafakulta.sk/course/view.php?id=199>

### 4.2 Realization of course parts

After signing into the course creator is taking to the home page which consists of following parts:

- Upper part of the screen – contains the name of course and name of logged person
- Left block- contains messages which course participants share, the list of the participants, activities belonging to form lectures, tests and other sources, searching, administration and the list of courses where user is signed.
- Middle block- represents the main content of the course. Opening part is not numbered and is used to explaining the content of the course

and definition of the targets to achieve. Course is made certain number of weeks or topics.

- Right block- contains other information such as news, coming events, calendar, list of logged users and note of their activity

Main activity, necessary after creating the course, is set up of course. In left menu, there is administration bookmark which contains set up. Using this entry allows to set up basic attributes, which will be defined in the course. Most used formats in system Moodle are weekly or thematic. In my project I used thematic format because the user can choose the order of topics which he wish to take sooner or later. System Moodle allows unlimited amount of set ups and actions, so I decided to describe the most important where belong also the presentation of students valuation. I defined that each student can through his whole study look up his continuous valuation. Maximum size of the download of file transfer in system Moodle by the administrator is limited to 16 MB. Because my course contains also videos, which size exceeds the limited value I decided to use links to external internet pages that I created for this purpose.

As the creator of the course I allowed unlimited possibility of sign in for students into the course and the period to sign in is defined as unlimited. When signing in to the course students do not have to fill the signing key

Adding sources and activities belongs to areas which I use often when creating the course. Using them the tutor can offer to students the materials in different forms and also make activities which back up interactivity of the course. Materials can come from internal sources transferred to server or from external sources.

## 5 COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF MANAGER- APPLICATION PART

Manager's role is the communication connection between companies leadership and its employees which he is leading. He brings the targets and assignments that must be accomplished to the employees, the opposite way the results and demands. He also provides communication of his team within the whole company, between individual divisions and teams, communication

with external partners but mostly he provides communication inside his team. His main leading tool is communication. Based on the communication manager is organizing all the team activities, leads employes- gives assignments, controls them and evaluates its fulfillment. Manager is affecting employee's relation to the company, his activity and working effort mainly by his example of behavior. Manager is representing the company within his own team. With his opinions work a behavior he creates company image to his team. Taking target strategies and changes depends on how the manager presents them. He is responsible for taking and caring through company targets and he is also responsible for the results corresponding with companies interests.

Education in this part is not bounded just for students, but it can be use for training of managers in companies. The company for implementing e- learning system need employee who is oriented in world of information technologies and as well understands to theme which should be processed. Obviously that alternative resolution is buy e- learning from other company what is more capital-intensive.

### 5.1 Managers competencies

Every company is looking to get the best commercial result and be competitive. To be able to do that without taking risk the company has to train the manager who is able to concentrate on strategically important issues, can develop intellect an emotional investment of the other employees. Recently there is growing ambition to use the concept of managerial competencies as the basic for development of human resources. Many experts specializing on human resources use competency models because they directly define competencies which are the base for high effort. Many statements show that business results depend on manager's abilities which can be exactly measured in competencies. Critical point by competencies is to separate the important and less important. If the competency model is incorrectly set up it can result in stagnancy of the manager's development. Each manager should have certain knowledge skills and abilities which

are necessary to his work, but only a little part of them separate excellent manager from the average.

By identifying key competencies by the selection of employees, it raises possibilities to hire suitable candidate's contrary standard methods. Employer can identify manager's competencies already by hiring interview, but it takes more time. Better accuracy by selection of the employees means that the new employee needs less teaching and can adapt faster in the company. Periodical evaluation of the employees from the point of competencies exactly shows in the areas where they should continue to develop. Feedback from different evaluators including subordinated reliably provides the level of competencies. If the competency model is correctly designed it can be used by the preparation of managers to higher positions.

### 5.2 Communication

Communication can be defined as a process of transferring information from one person (group) to another person (group).

To requirements of realization of communication in organizations frame belong:

- Existence of information that has to be transferred
- Connecting of at least two people, sender and receiver
- Transfer of communication through communication channel

Communication in organization has several functions:

- Informative- gives certain information that serves for decisions or performance
- Motivating- encourages people to execute tasks
- Controlling- allows revision of activities
- Emotional- allows to express feelings

Model of communicative process is made of several main parts in process of communication:

- Communicator- (sender), is the carrier of idea that he wants to transfer to an individual or group
- Encryption- every idea is expressed in form of certain words, symbol, gestures etc.

- Media- (channel)- appropriate media used to carry message from sender to receiver
- Receiver or decoder- receives messages and transfers it to applicable form
- Buzz- is certain interference to communicative process concerned transferred message
- Feedback- received messages often encourages receiver to answer, which allows communication process to continue

Communication can be divided to:

- Organizational- which includes transfer of information and its meaning in companies frames (is divided to formal and informal)
- Interpersonal- which includes mutual communication of individuals face to face and in group. It has different forms- from occasional expressions to orders. We consider it the main tool of communication of manager and it takes about three quarters of manager's communication daily. Interpersonal communication can be verbal or nonverbal

### 5.3 Communication skills

The most valuable investments of the company are employees and abilities, knowledge, skills, positive behavior and loyalty. The personality of manager is made of many psychological features. To the basic in are of communication that the manager should handle belongs some parts.

Interpretation of an idea has to respond to the level of receivers understanding. The form of presentation and communicative channel is also important. Evenly important in communication of manager is harmony of speech and nonverbal statements. The most important form of communication is personal discussion. That means the most of communicative skills and abilities is expressed exactly through ability of express oneself. By the expression it is necessary care of being understood and also take notice of understanding. A lot of matters that managers have to deal with at the same time can results in not concentrating to communication with partner. The result is expansion of communication and then its non efficiency. If the communicative parts are not concentrated, it can bring wrong results without understanding of the coherences. By the discussion

is it important to think of what the shared information means to both communicative sites. It happens often that people don't get along because they don't want to and they are not willing to come to agreement because of their antipathy. Declaration as „I will not talk to him“ are unprofessional and not acceptable. This behavior comes from sense of power and the possibility to uncontrolled acting. But that is not right, because manager should lead by example and with his behavior creates norms for others. It is correct if the feedback is accepted as the tool of personable development, which is based on pretentiousness and self-esteem. In other words it is willingness of understanding the other and in that regard accommodate.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

With communication we meet every day, whether in private or business life. That's why should care about method of expression. Purpose of course Communication skills of a manager that I created in system Moodle, is to introduce managers communication. I believe that every participant will take lot of interesting information it will help him by building the career of a manager.

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