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E – learning as an innovative method of education

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ABSTRACT

To implement modern methods of teaching which is e - learning largely has served to promote access to the Internet. Despite the fact that e - learning is recognized as one of the innovative training methods , it is really its origins date back to the turn of the century. In this article will be present the results of the conducted survey, which aim was the judgment of the described method of teaching.

Keywords: e - learning; teaching method; distance education

1. INTRODUCTION

E-learning, which is an innovative method of teaching, has been implemented into the world of education largely because of the promotion of access to the Internet. Despite the fact that e-learning is considered to be one of the innovative methods of teaching, its origins date back to the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. [1]

The pressure laid by the European Union to initiate innovations in every discipline of science has served to use different sorts of e - learning as one of the many methods of education. [2] Not only universality, but also the progress in technology and the availability of the Internet greatly facilitated introduction and spread of distance learning methods at many universities in Poland. E - learning enables students to develop their skills in the field of use of computer systems and helps them to work on their personality skills so that they can feel more confident while looking for job in the future. [3]

2. DISTANCE LEARNING

E - learning is considered to be a method of education, in which there is no physical contact between the student and the lecturer. Distance learning has won sympathy of those students who for various reasons do not have the opportunity to participate in the traditional form of classes. [4] Nevertheless, the validity of this training is being questioned by some people. According to them, it is a computer that assesses the knowledge of students and tutors. Such considerations contradict the concept of e - learning, in which the computer is just a tool used for the exchange of messages. [5]

During free on - line classes it is possible to make video conferencing, post entries, transmit voice and images. Study materials can be sent in the form of files which students can later print. [6] The duration of courses at distance is determined by the university authorities and the lectures. Only students of a particular school may take part in this kind of classes. They receive their individual passwords and are able to log on an educational platform. [7] This platform is open 365 days a year. The lecturer, who has control over the content of classes, requires from students to log on to the platform and take active part in the training. The student may contact and exchange notes not only with the teacher but also with other participants of the classes. [8]

In e – learning, the vast part of the duties of the teacher falls on the course takers. [9] Some people believe this is a positive factor as it requires from students not only to effectively search for sources of knowledge but also to develop their skills and use of content remarks to form and express their beliefs over discussed issues. [10] E-learning courses predominate in higher education, but they are also used in secondary schools. [11] Some educational websites also offer a wide range of online training and by participating in them students can obtain certificates. [12]

3. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF E – LEARNING

Positive and negative sides of distance learning are analyzed according to the position and situation of the judging person. While, certain criteria are not evaluated similarly by the student and the lecturer, some obtain consistent review by the representatives of both sides: students and teachers. [13]

E-learning is recommended by lecturers due to possibility of better monitoring of the progress made by their students. On the other hand, students, who can feel stressed under time pressure, appreciate the fact that they are not required to answer questions immediately. [14] Online learning enables students' development. The students can respond with reserve to the interpretation of the presented material and they may also become more direct in their learning process. [15] Students point out that the main advantages of e-learning are the use of multimedia, no need for visiting the school every day, the prospect of a joint communication with other course takers, [16] elimination of the anxiety created by the prospect of public oral expression, convenient deadline for completion of tasks placed on the learning platform, own learning pace, reduction of anxiety created by direct contact with the lecturer. [17]

Both the course takers and the teachers agree that one basic disadvantage of distance learning is the lack of 'face to face' interaction. [18] Another drawback is that the time given for the completion of tasks online prolongs significantly in comparison to amount of time

spent on completing them in traditional teaching. Character and disposition of each of the students contribute to this fact. [19]

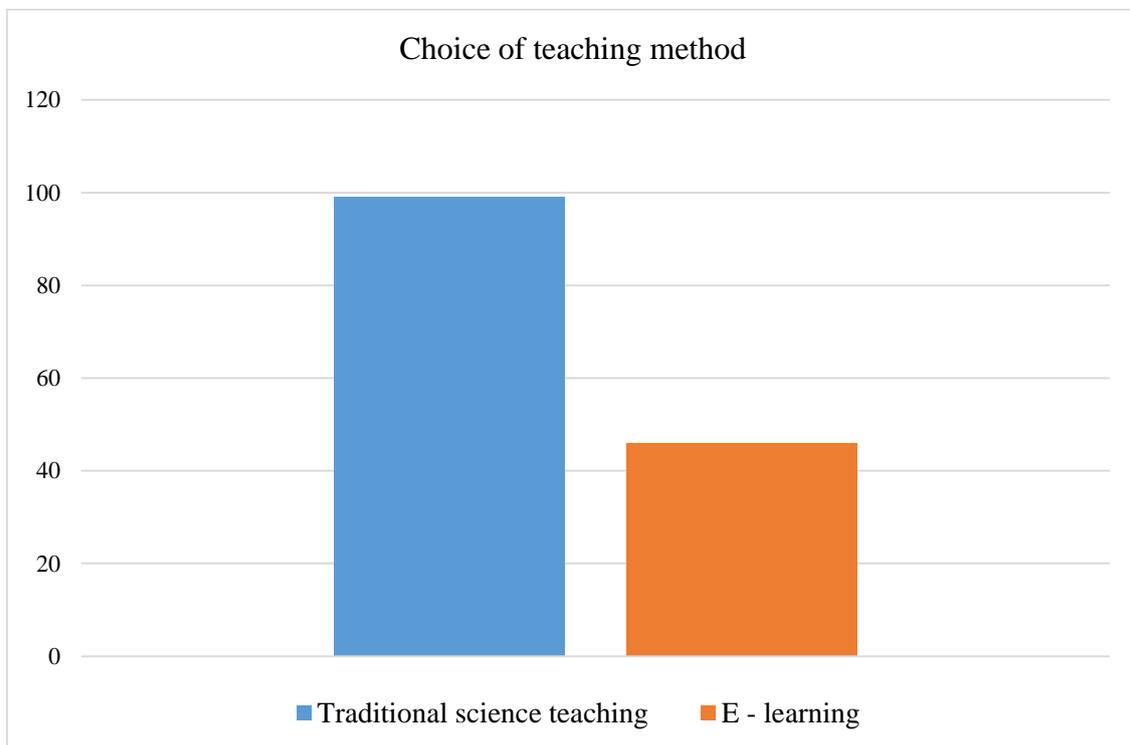
Each student is required to become acquainted with the mission and teaching tools used in the given school, and think if he wants to study at school in which learning at distance takes place. [20]

4. ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH

The study was conducted with the use of a survey, which was sent to a group of 150 students, who had already dealt with e-learning.

The first task in the survey checked whether students dealt with the total loss of data while using the learning platform. [21] The result is surprising, because according to the interpretation, up to 102 people lost data which could not be recovered and all work of students was in vain. The remaining group of respondents did not encounter the problem of data loss. Therefore, the suggestion would be to put more work and effort in improving the e-learning platform, so in the future students could avoid problem with data loss. Another task of respondents was to tell which method of teaching and learning they recognize to be better: e - learning or traditional methods. 99 people identified the traditional teaching methods as the better, and 46 people would prefer to have classes in the form of e-learning. Five respondents were not able to point out which method is better. The result might be different if more respondents took part in the study.

Figure 1. Choice of teaching method



Source: own work

The last question required answer why students had chosen only the activities in the form of e-learning and was asked only to those students, who in the previous question, were in favour of online learning.

Proponents of distance learning (18 people) decided that one of the main advantages of distance learning was studying at home, at any time. 13 students named working as the reason why they had chosen online learning. It can be assumed that among this group of respondents were extramural students or those who wanted to combine study with their work. 11 respondents named saving of time as the main factor which helped them decide on online education. 3 students had chosen the distance learning because of doing two degrees at the same time, whereas one person named another cause.

5. CONCLUSION

E-learning is not an easy form of education, therefore it is introduced gradually. It requires proper adoption from both students and teachers.

Contrary to appearances, e – learning classes do not reduce the work effort of the lecturer. It all depends on the curriculum, a group of students, the degree of their mobilization as well as on the use of creative forms of teaching.

Unfortunately, in this form of education, students do not show up too much commitment, do not complete their homework assignments and also reluctantly take part in various discussions on the online forum. This situation usually changes just before the exam.

Through the use of distance learning schools of higher education increase their chances to participate in not only domestic but also in international research projects, many of which are financed by the European Union.

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