Learning About Open Learning

Methods and Tools of Open Learning:

Klaipėda University, Lithuania;
Herriott-Watt Uni, Scotland;
Kaunas Uni of Technology, LT

Doc. dr. Vitalij Denisov,
Klaipėda University, Lithuania
Structure and Content (modules)

- Target Audience (students groups) Identification.
- Development of ODL Material:
  - Learning Theories;
  - Methods for Material Development;
  - Material on the Web.
- Student support systems.
- Quality Management, Validation and Accreditation of ODL Courses.
- Implementation and Management of ODL Courses
Target Groups Identification

- Students motivation, knowledge background, resources available;
- Who are your students: altruists, pragmatics…
- What they will earn from the course:
  - knowledge and skills, study support,
  - career perspectives, certificate,
  - choice of learning styles,
  - choice of learning methods and tools.
Learning Theories

- Open Learning as an ideal: “any place any time”.
- Distance Learning: Teaching and Learning occur at Different Places.
- ODL features:
  - forecast of student potential problems, needs;
  - high quality and very flexible study material;
  - based on behaviour learning principles.
Behaviouristic Learning

- Acquire of Competence through performing the Activities planned;
- Assessment based on Difference between entrance and final knowledge level and skills;
- Students Abilities by the end of the course should meet the Course Objectives, Aims and Goals.
Learning Styles
(Kolb, 1984; Mumford & Honey, 1992)

- Doing
  - concrete experience

- Testing
  - simulation, active experimentation,

- Thinking
  - reflective observations

- Concluding
  - abstract conceptualisation

Doc. dr. V. Denisov, KU
Material Development Methods

- Analysis of Ideas
- General schematic
- Mapping of Ideas
- Statements networks
- Algorithmic schemes
- Activity Sequence
- ...

Active learning basis:
- Reflection points;
- Discussion points;
- SAQs;
- tasks and activities;
- group (project) tasks.

TMAs - Tutor Marked Assessments.
Courses on the Web

- Advantages:
  - flexibility;
  - cost efficient;
  - global audience;
  - employment of a variety of different environments and media;
  - support for collaborative learning;
  - expandability ...

- Shortcomings:
  - technical, financial, etc. access restrictions;
  - need for qualified tutors;
  - good quality teaching material is expensive;
  - electronic discussions are robotic and could not replace a real relations between learners ...
Developing Web based Courses

- Integration of different sources of information
- Integration of different media and services
- Use of Searching systems:
  - standard web search engines;
  - structured (academic) sources.
- Structured information sources:
  - Information Gateways;
  - Virtual Libraries;
  - Course Catalogues;
  - Network Collections of Courses.
Structured Information Sources

- **Information Gateways:**
  - ADAM - http://adam.ac.uk/ (Fine Arts and Design)
  - biz/ed - http://www.bized.ac.uk/ (Business Education)
  - EEVL - http://www.eevl.ac.uk/ (Engineering)

- **Virtual Libraries:** http://www.w3.org/vl/

- **Catalogues:** http://www.minnigco.com/

- **Collections:** GlobeWide Network Academy
  http://www.utexas.edu/world/lecture/index.html
Quality of Web Based Material

- **General Criteria:**
  - accuracy of information;
  - authors, their qualification
  - structurization;
  - objectiveness of information;
  - when published and last updated.

- **Additional Criteria:**
  - intuitive interface;
  - flexibility of material;
  - testability of material;
  - expandability of material;
  - interactivity;
  - availability of plug-ins;
  - goals and tools balance.
ODL Environment Identification
*(based on B. Lockitt, *FEDA*, 1997)*

- Tutor and learner in the same place at the same time: timetabled env., classroom based
- Tutor and learner in the same place but at a different time: flexible / OL environment
- Tutor and learner in a different place at the same time: flexible / OL and ILT environment
- Tutor and learner in a different place at a different time: VLE - Virtual Learning Environment
Tools for Material Development and Delivery

- HTML and HTML editors
- JavaScript
- Courseware:
  - WebCT (Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh);
  - Lotus LearningSpace;
  - Luvit (Lund University, Sweden);
  - BlackBoard;
  - Rotor (California State University Dominguez Hills).
Support Categories

- **General**
  - f.e. teacher evaluation and mark for marked tasks

- **Specific**
  - Conversation with teacher (by phone)

- **Formal**
- **Informal**
What are main sources of support?

Support should be provided to learner during the whole course from the following sources:

- course manuals and textbooks,
- tutors,
- other students,
- support structures
When the support should be given?

- A priori (i.e. before studies)
  - description of course structure, assessment criteria, credits and future qualification;
  - introductory seminars with tutors;
  - videoconferences.
When the support should be given (2)

- During the course
  - study material and answers to SAQs,
  - answers to general questions about schedule, problems solving, assessment, etc.,
  - monitoring of student activities and their stimulation by tutor,
  - registration of students activities (f.e., routes through the material) by teachware,
  - students collaboration and groupwork.
When the support should be given (3)

- After studies:
  - advices about further study directions,
  - success stories,
  - former students reflections.
Support Methods for On-line Courses (1)

- Online courses support measures:
  - FAQs
  - Answer Webs
  - On-line Knowledge Testing
  - On-line Assessment
Support Methods for On-line Courses (2)

- **Communications**
  - Asynchronous measures:
    - Electronic Mail
    - Discussion Forums
    - Communication Control
  - Synchronous measures
- **Collaboration and Group-Work**
- **Collaboration Tools**
- **Tutoring and Virtual Learning Environments**
Additions to the Material

Active learning elements:

- Discussion questions
- Reflection points
- SAQs
  - Recommended answers and advices.
Online Resources

- FAQs example: http://www.ufaq.org/section_one.html
- WebTest: http://flex-learn.ma.hw.ac.uk/
- WebBoard: http://webboard.oreilly.com/
- NetMeeting: http://www.microsoft.com/netmeeting/
- WebCT: http://www.webct.com/
- TopClass: http://www.topclass.com/
- Rotor: http://www.rotorcom.com/
- ..................
ODL in Lithuania:
Recent Developments

LieDM and MetDM projects running from 1998. Co-ordinator: Kaunas University of Technology Regional DE Study Centre (http://distance.ktu.lt)

- Number of Web courses have been developed;
- Number of VLE have been tested;
- Infrastructure for Real-Time OL has been created and regular videoconferencing courses started in 1999/2000 academic year;
- Regular international ODE conferences in Lithuania started in 1999.
ODL infrastructure development
(A. Targamadze, D. Rutkauskiene, KTU, 1999-2002)
Thank You for Your Attention!

Wishing You Success with TeachWare Selection,

Vitalij Denisov