

# Support of DE by the Digital Libraries

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## Abstract

The article deals with the problem of recommended readings for the lonely students in the distance education teaching/learning processes. The distance education is accepted as one from the life-long education starting from the former correspondence study and in the recent time and thanks to the rapid development of ICT, there is more and more of inter-activity, partly based on the new ICT technologies. The basic study materials are delivered to the student in the form of learning package. Part of the learning package are usually recommended readings. Readings must be accessible to every student, to keep identical conditions for all students (democracy in education). Readings must accept copyrights and bring real added value for the student. The role of digital libraries in the delivery of recommended readings could be in the near future important, because of the access to ITC connection all over the world. The article discuss the potential use of digital libraries for the students in distance education.

## Distance Education Learning Packages

Distance education is the *pedagogical technology*, how to support the student in the self-study process. The major difference between face to face study and distance education is in the separation of the teaching and learning process. To ensure this process successful, there is a lot of supportive tools, which are organised by the DE delivery institution.

The DE student had to obtain the learning package including not only text or other media as a holder of information for self-study, but also the concomitant information about the time schedule of study, , deadlines for his assignments and exams, timing of presence seminars (if any) and tutorials. The part of learning package ought to be the recommended *readings*. The usual structure of learning package is following :

- General information about the institution and study programme
- Study guide for distance education
- Time schedule of study programme
- Introductory to the study module
- Contact list of institution staff (course manager, tutor, administrator etc.)
- Electronic links for inter-activity in the self-study process with the institution
- Study materials for self-study
- Supportive multimedia (audio-, video-cassettes, discs, CD-Roms,
- Forms for Tutor\_s Assessed Assignments
- Evaluation forms
- Readings (books or extracts from the books)

## Position of readings in the DE Learning Packages

The problems of readings is done by the accessibility for each student. There are the problems with copyrights if there are only extracts from recommend professional literature or with the cost of the whole books added to the learning package. The theoretical way how to solve the problem is to address the student to the public or professional library. But in this situation we create the different condition of study for students from different regions. The advantage of Distance Education is in the independence on the study place and time of study. If we strictly recommend the visits of public libraries, there is the problems with students, who have not access to the such a library in the region and they had to cross to long distance, spent time and pay additional expenses

connected with their study. From this reasons (democratic and comparable study conditions for all students) , the obligatory visits of libraries are not the part of DE generally. The problem is solved at the DE Universities in EU by the selected study literature located in the study centres or by the post service of the university library.

## **Ways of on line study**

The recent time is significant by the growing application of Internet (or other electronic networks) for transfer of information and delivery of study materials. Of course that without strict keeping of the principles of DE the final effects are usually very modest. But the institutions in the EU are dealing with the various ways, how to apply the learning via Internet and there are (especially in France) already models how to provide it successfully. The on-line study is well possible and the amount of information can be sufficient. The problem is only with the „overloading“ of student by the non-relevant information. This tendency is typical for academic, who are not able to separate the relevant and non-relevant information for practical use. The DE student looks for study to improve his position on the labour market and no to accumulate huge amount of its say useful, but not relevant information.

If we will be able to cross and accept all this in fact predicted conditions and limits, there is a good opportunity to recommend to the student the readings via Internet - in the digital library. The technical problem with the storing of whole library in the net is in the hands of ICT experts. From the point of view of DE technology, there is a good perspective to use the digital libraries for all students, because the access to Internet is practically in each place. The French model of electronic distribution of education presents good balance between self-study via Internet and face to face contact of student with the DE delivery institution. The transfer of learning package to the electronic form is saving a lot of costs and the additional readings could be included there as well. The recommended readings must exist in the electronic form as well and digital libraries could play the crucial role in this point.

## **Shifting perspectives**

For the serious discussion about application of ICT in the distance education is necessary to consider the approach of con-temporal students of secondary grammar schools and universities, These groups of /nowadays young people) are the potential students of Life-Long-Learning programmes including distance Education . This target group of client will accept in fact only up dated technologies for communication and learning. Also the approach to the LLL changed in the recent time according to development of learning society. The conventional study programmes are more and more substituted by the flexible and *taylored* study programmes. The learning society will give more and more emphasis on the individualisation of study opportunities with the growing share of interactive contact with the teaching institution. Already now we can observe the huge interest for electronic delivered teaching. The problem of near all of this marketed models is in the weak acceptance of DE technology and over-assessment of the electronic distribution channels possibilities. The best electronic links cannot substitute the motivation to the study or the individual approach of good tutor. Electronic links are only new way of information transfer, but definitely it is not a new teaching/learning technology. Flexibility in the educational processes must be supported by the corresponding learning environment and this is the good chance and challenge for digital libraries.

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